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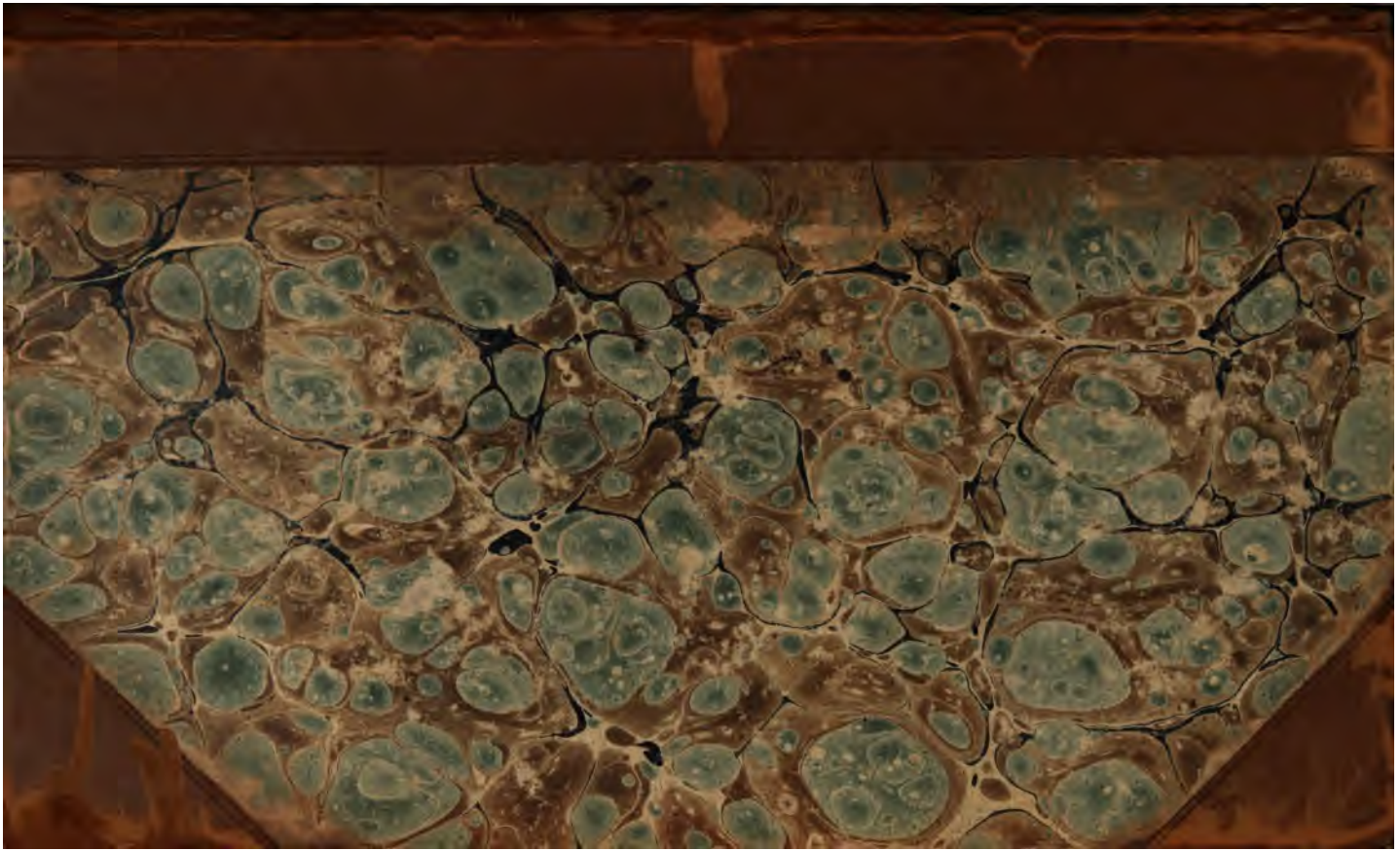

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MENTAL DISCIPLINE;

OR,

HINTS ON THE CULTIVATION

OF

INTELLECTUAL & MORAL HABITS:

ADDRESSED PARTICULARLY TO

STUDENTS IN THEOLOGY

AND

Young Preachers.

BY

HENRY FORSTER BURDER, M. A.

THIRD EDITION, CONSIDERABLY ENLARGED.

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INTRODUCTION.

In every system of liberal education, there are two objects to be proposed and accomplished,—the communication of valuable knowledge, and the formation of those mental habits which may facilitate subsequent attainments. Of these two objects, the latter is indisputably the more important; although by many "it has been unfortunately forgotten, that the communication of truth is only one half of the business of education, and is not even the most

important half." In this opinion, expressed by Dr. Barrow, Mr. Locke also concurs. "As it is in the body," observes this great philosopher, "so it is in the mind, practice makes it what it is; and most even of those excellencies which are looked on as natural endowments, will be found, when examined into more minutely, to be the product of exercise, and to be raised to that pitch by repeated actions." In another part of his Essay on the Conduct of the Human Understanding, he observes, to the same effect, that, "the faculties of the soul are improved and made useful to us, just after the same manner as our bodies are. Would you have a man," he asks, "write or paint well, or perform any other mechanical operation dexterously and with ease; let him have ever

so much vigour and activity, suppleness and address, yet nobody expects this from him, unless he has been used to it, and has employed time and pains in fashioning and forming his hand or other parts to these motions. Just so it is in the mind. Would you have a man reason well, you must use him to it betimes, exercise his mind in it, observing the connexion of ideas, and following them in train."

If, then, the cultivation of habits favourable to mental improvement, be the most important object at which an instructor can aim, in his plan of education, it is in a high degree desirable, that he should adopt that mode of communicating knowledge to his pupils, by which their powers of mind may be excited to the most vigorous exercise, and

subjected to the control of the most beneficial discipline.

In the course of the Author's Academic engagements, considerations relative to various points of mental discipline have been perpetually occurring to his mind, and have been very frequently suggested by him to his young friends and pupils, without being reduced to writing. He has, however, entertained the idea that an attempt to convey them in a form more explicit, connected and permanent, might not be unacceptable to them, and perhaps not altogether without benefit to others. He by no means imagines that the following pages embrace all the principles connected with the subject of Mental Discipline; he presents them to the reader simply as "*Hints*," with the hope that they will be found to comprehend

those principles which may be justly deemed of the highest importance.

He is fully aware that a complete system of Intellectual Discipline should commence with an inquiry into the powers of the mind, and should be pursued by the guidance of a philosophical analysis. This the Author has not neglected in his course of Academic Lectures, but, in the following pages, his object is merely to offer, in the most concise form, such advices as he deems of primary importance.

Perhaps some apology may be deemed necessary for the peculiar form in which the following Hints are conveyed. The Author has only to observe, that it is the style in which, without any undue assumption of authority or of importance, a Tutor may be supposed respectfully to

address those whose intellectual progress he anxiously desires to facilitate. It is also a mode of address most favourable to conciseness and to clearness of expression.

The advices conveyed in the following pages are distributed and arranged under two general divisions: The First Division regards INTELLECTUAL Habits; the Second Division regards MORAL Habits. The First Division includes two distinct parts:—the first part contains, Hints to aid the cultivation of Mental Habits with a view to the *acquisition* of Knowledge, in a course of Preparatory Study;—the second, Hints to aid the cultivation of Mental Habits with a view to the *communication* of Knowledge in the engagements of the Christian Ministry. This division is adopted, not only because

the line of separation is distinct and obvious, but also because the hints suggested, and the principles enforced, in the first part, are of general utility, and applicable to the cultivation of the human mind, whether with or without any reference to professional engagements; while the advices conveyed in the second part are almost exclusively applicable to those for whose use they are specifically designed.

In the first instance, the Author submitted to the Public only his Hints on the cultivation of INTELLECTUAL Habits. The favourable reception of these induced him, after the interval of two years, to publish his Hints on the cultivation of MORAL Habits. His little work having been for some time out

of print, and having been frequently in demand, he has been induced to revise, and in many instances to *amplify*, his brief advices, and to publish the whole in this one volume. He commits it, in its present form, to the blessing of "the Father of Spirits," who has often condescended to honour, with extensive usefulness, even feeble and imperfect efforts. May he deign to connect with the perusal of these pages the influence of the Holy Spirit, whose office it is to illuminate and renovate, to purify and invigorate the mind of man, and to secure the cultivation of those "intellectual and moral habits," by which "the man of God may be thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

MENTAL DISCIPLINE.

I.

ON INTELLECTUAL HABITS.

PART I.

HINTS WITH A VIEW TO AID THE CULTIVATION OF THOSE INTELLECTUAL HABITS WHICH WILL BEST FACILITATE THE ACQUISITION OF KNOWLEDGE.

I.

Endeavour to form a correct Estimate of your own Powers.

EVERY individual has been accustomed to form some estimate of his own talents. His opinion may have been formed in very early life, and may have been modified by frequent comparisons between himself and his associates, as well as by the commendations and animadversions of his superiors. But this estimate may be

exceedingly incorrect. It may be by far too favourable; or it may be by far too unfavourable. In either case the influence will be prejudicial.

If the estimate be *too favourable*, not a few evils may be generated, of which the tendency will be to obstruct intellectual progress.

It may be expected to produce that pride and self-complacency which will conceal from the individual the defects of his capacities and his attainments, enfeeble the stimulus to exertion, and render him impatient, if not indignant, when deficiencies are exposed of which he was not aware, and errors which he is not prepared to acknowledge.

It may also induce a person to enter prematurely on a species of intellectual effort to which his mental energy is inadequate. "Though the faculties of the mind are improved by exercise," observes Mr. Locke; "yet they must not be put to a stress beyond their strength. *Quid valeant humeri, quid ferre recusent*, must be made the measure of every one's understanding, who has a desire, not only to perform well, but to keep up the vigour of his faculties. The mind, by being engaged in a task beyond its strength,

like the body, strained by lifting at a weight too heavy, has often its force broken, and thereby gets an unaptness, or an aversion, to any vigorous attempt ever after. The understanding should be brought to the difficult and knotty parts of knowledge, that try the strength of thought, and a full bent of the mind, by insensible degrees."

If the estimate which any one has formed of his own talents be *too unfavourable*, the *moral* effect may indeed be advantageous by the excitement of humility and modesty, yet it may be unfriendly to *intellectual* progress, by depressing the mind, and discouraging those efforts which might be made with success. Many pursuits appear on a distant and indistinct survey to be environed by insurmountable obstacles, whereas, on a nearer approach, the difficulties become less formidable and soon entirely disappear. Many of the early attempts which mental discipline prescribes, are onerous and irksome to those who are only beginning to cultivate habits of intellectual exertion; and the minds of some who are not deficient in ability may be ready to shrink from a task, to which they imagine themselves unequal. Let them

guard against such an estimate of their own powers as would discourage vigorous exertion, and impede the march of intellect, of which it may be said with undoubting confidence, "*vires acquirit eundo.*"

II.

Attach Importance to the various branches of Study prescribed, not only as they may appear directly to bear upon the Pursuits of future life, but also as they tend to promote the Discipline and Improvement of the Mind.

From the limited powers of the human mind and the restricted time which is usually devoted to intellectual culture, it is important that a selection of objects should be judiciously made from the numerous pursuits of literature and of science. That such a selection should be made, with a distinct reference to the engagements of future life, it is readily conceded; but with a view to ultimate success, those engagements should be, in the order of time, a secondary, and by no means a primary, object of attention. In a liberal education there is much which is preliminary. No superstructure should be attempted, till the basis be rendered broad and

firm. The first object of solicitude should be, to give vigour and expansion to the faculties of the mind. Whatever pursuits are best adapted to secure this end should be selected by the instructor, and, by the learner, should be regarded with interest, and prosecuted with ardour. Let him not imagine that they are of inferior importance, because he cannot discern any direct connexion with the leading object of his professional career. Let him rather inquire into their tendency to subject his mind to a salutary discipline; and to form those habits of thought and study, by which his future progress may be directed and facilitated. The Student in Theology, for example, may perhaps entertain doubts with regard to the utility of studies in *Mathematics*, or in *the Philosophy of the human mind;* yet it is not difficult to exhibit the direct and powerful tendency of these pursuits to generate habits of incalculable value to those who, in the discharge of their professional engagements, will find occasion for the exercise of accurate discrimination, and the power of conclusive reasoning. Could it even be shown, that the researches of Mathematical Science and of Mental Philosophy, would impart but

little information of real value, still it might be contended, that the advantages accruing from the very efforts of intellectual energy which they call forth, must secure to the Student an ample remuneration for his expenditure of time, and to the Tutor a full justification of the course prescribed.

Such was the importance attached to *Mathematical* studies by that able reasoner, the late Bishop Watson, that he regarded an initiation into the processes of Geometrical Demonstration as incalculably advantageous in promoting mental discipline. He stated it to be his deliberate opinion that were the attention restricted even to the first book of Euclid's Elements, a familiar acquaintance with its reasonings could not fail to render substantial benefit to the mind of the learner.

In recommending a vigorous application of the mind to the solution of a question of difficulty in *Intellectual Philosophy*, the late distinguished Professor of moral Philosophy in the University of Edinburgh thus urged and encouraged the efforts of the Students.

"In some former *severe* discussions like the present, I endeavoured to extract for you some

little consolation, from that very fortitude of attention which the discussion required,—pointing out to you the advantage of questions of this kind, in training the mind to those habits of serious thought and patient investigation, which, considered in their primary relation to the intellectual character, are of infinitely greater importance than the instruction which the question itself may afford. '*Generosos animos labor nutrit.*' In the discipline of reason, as in the training of the Athletæ, it is not for a single victory, which it may give to the youthful champion, that the combat is to be valued, but for that knitting of the joints, and hardening of the muscles,—that quickness of eyes and collectedness of effort, which it is forming, for the struggles of more illustrious fields."*

III.

Apply the Mind with full Vigour and undivided Attention to every intellectual Pursuit in which you engage.

In the entrance on a course of mental discipline, the effort to fix the attention for any

* Dr. Thos. Brown's Lectures on the Philosophy of the Human Mind, Vol. II. page 351.

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length of time on the object of study is found to be difficult, if not irksome. Ideas which would divert the mind into a different train of thought are suggested, either by external circumstances, or by the subject under consideration; and as many of these ideas may be more interesting, as well as more familiar to the mind, they are not repressed without difficulty, and they still recur after reiterated efforts of exclusion. This state of mind induces much more painful fatigue than the most vigorous efforts of attention, especially as it is associated with the feelings of dissatisfaction and regret. In this case, to use the words of Mr. Stewart, "it is not an exclusive and steady attention that we give to the object, but we are losing sight of it, and recurring to it every instant; and the painful efforts of which we are conscious, are not (as we are apt to suppose them to be) efforts of uncommon attention, but unsuccessful attempts to keep the mind steady to its object, and to exclude the extraneous ideas, which are from time to time soliciting its notice."

In proportion to the facility of repelling the intrusion of these extraneous ideas, and of directing a fixed attention to the object of study,

the mind is prepared for success in the operations of intellect. There is even reason to attribute mental superiority, in no small degree, to the possession of an habitual power of control over the train of thought which occupies the mind; and to this power of attention, we are informed, Sir Isaac Newton himself ascribed his loftiest attainments in science.

Let then the mind of the Student be deeply impressed with a conviction of the importance of this habit, and of the practicability of making great and indefinite progress in acquiring the power of fixed attention. Let him resolve that he will daily make the most vigorous efforts; that he will summon the full energy of his mind, whenever he is engaged in study; and that he will never tolerate in himself a habit of languid and intermitting application. Let him be assured, that if ever he allow this, he not only loses his time, and frustrates his immediate object, but that he injures the tone and impairs the vigour of his mind. "When you remit your attention," said Epictetus, "do not fancy you can recover it when you please, but remember that by the fault of to-day, you will be in a worse state to-morrow, and a habit of not attending is induced. Why should

you not preserve a constant attention? There is no concern of life in which attention is not required."

In order successfully to cultivate the power of attention, we must endeavour to combine energy and tranquillity. There should be, as much as possible, freedom from all that disturbs; and then a full excitement and continued effort of intellectual energy. The effort may be difficult, and the success imperfect; but, beyond all doubt, the difficulty will diminish, the success will be progressive, and the attainment, even in a limited degree, will be an ample remuneration for strenuous and persevering exertions. "What should we have thought of the competitor in the Olympic course (asks Dr. Thomas Brown, in an animated address to his Students) whose object was the glory of a prize,—if, with that illustrious reward before him—with strength and agility that might insure him the possession of it—and with all the assembled multitudes of Greece to witness his triumph, he had turned away from the contest, and from victory, because he was not to tread on softness, and to be refreshed with fragrance, as he moved along! In that knowledge which awaits your studies, in the various sciences to which your attention may be turned, *you* have a *much*

nobler prize before you; and therefore I shall not hesitate to call forth, occasionally, all the vigour of your attention, at the risk of a little temporary fatigue, as often as it shall appear to me, that, by exciting you to more than ordinary intellectual activity, I can facilitate your acquisition of a reward, which the listless exertions of the indolent never can obtain, and which is as truly the prize of strenuous effort, as the Palms of the Circus or the Course."*

IV.

Uniformly endeavour to attain clear and precise Ideas on every subject of investigation; and never allow indistinctness and confusion of thought to remain in the mind, without a determined effort to arrive at discriminating and accurate conceptions.

A DISPOSITION to rest satisfied with obscure and indefinite notions, on subjects within the limits of our knowledge, is at once an indication of the want of mental vigour, and a most formidable barrier in the way of intellectual improvement. On the other hand, a dissatisfaction

* Lectures on the Philosophy of the Human Mind, Vol. I. page 133.

with imperfect and half-formed conceptions is a most powerful stimulus to further inquiry, and an effectual preservative from the error of taking for granted, that we already know that of which we are, in truth, only beginning to perceive our ignorance. "The greatest part of true knowledge," observes Mr. Locke, "lies in a distinct perception of things in themselves distinct. And some men give more clear light and knowledge, by the bare, distinct stating of a question, than others by taking of it in gross, whole hours together. In this, they who so state a question, do no more, but separate and disentangle the parts of it, one from another, and lay them, when so disentangled, in their due order. This often, without any more ado, resolves the doubt, and shows the mind where the truth lies. In learning any thing, as little should be proposed to the mind at once as possible; and that being understood, and fully mastered, proceed to the next adjoining part, yet unknown, simple, unperplexed proposition, belonging to the matter in hand, and tending to the clearing what is principally designed."

Whether our immediate object be to arrive at clear conceptions in our own train of thought, or

to convey our ideas with clearness to others, it is of the greatest importance to study precision in the use of *language*. It is by the aid of language that we carry on our processes of thought; and unless we accustom ourselves to accurate definitions and distinctions, our notions must be obscure, our reasonings perplexed, and our conclusions frequently erroneous. We often impose upon ourselves, by falsely imagining that we sufficiently understand a subject, because we are familiar with many of the comprehensive terms in which that subject is usually discussed, whereas to many of those terms we may never have attached any precise or definite ideas.

V.

Endeavour carefully to discriminate between sound and false Reasoning; that you may readily detect, and never employ, Arguments wanting in solidity.

The intermixture of arguments which are weak and inconclusive with such as are strong and irresistible, has often been subservient to the interests of sophistry; and to the undiscerning, this has made "the worse appear the better

reason." But if this has frequently been practised, with express design, by the advocate of error, it has also been sometimes practised, without design, by the defender of truth. It has too often been forgotten, that *arguments are to be weighed, not numbered;* and that, in truth, a weak, a doubtful, or an inconclusive argument, has the effect of diminishing the force of those which are undeniably strong. It excites in the mind suspicion, both as to the talents of the reasoner and the accuracy of his opinions. In short it has the same effect in the process of moral reasoning as a *negative quantity* in the solution of *algebraic problems*. It effects a diminution of value to the full amount of the quantity which it represents.

In the conduct of life, and certainly in every professional career, it is of still greater importance to exercise a sound and discriminating judgment, than even to have at command ample stores of literature and science. A lesson of no inconsiderable value should be learned from the example of those writers (and they are not few in number) whose memory has been much more successfully cultivated than their judgment; who excite admiration at the rich and varied treasures of their knowledge, without inspiring respect for

their opinions, or confidence in their reasonings; who can, with apparent facility, borrow illustrations and embellishments from almost every department of science, but employ them in aid of opinions formed with incautious haste, supported by fallacious arguments, and maintained with all the confidence of dogmatism.

VI.

Endeavour to acquire the Habit of strict and diligent Investigation.

"To investigate, in the original sense of the word, is to search for an unknown object by discovering and following out the traces which it has left, in the path which leads to its unknown situation. Thus we find where a person is concealed, by tracing his footsteps from the place whence he set out." In the investigation of truth, we set out from a point which is already ascertained, with a view to our arrival at a point not yet ascertained. But this progress is not to be effected by plans arbitrary or capricious. Our steps must be directed, and our efforts must be guided, by certain principles of inquiry and research. There is a certain process of thought,—an unbroken series of causes and

consequences, by which alone we can pass from that which is known to that which is unknown. If any of the links of that chain be disjoined, or rather if they be not clearly discovered, the interval may indeed be supplied by conjecture, but the investigation is incomplete. Now the true spirit of investigation, and a facility in pursuing the requisite inquiries, are not of easy acquisition. They are the result of frequent efforts and judicious discipline. But the value of the attainment is an ample compensation for the labour which it demands. The habit acquired is applicable to all the objects which are placed within the grasp of the human faculties. It is equally requisite, and equally beneficial, in the investigation of individual character, of historic facts, of the phenomena of matter and of mind, and of the still more interesting and momentous truths which constitute the system of divine revelation.

This habit of careful investigation will exert a salutary influence on the intellectual character, in producing a manly independence of mind. He who has been accustomed to examine for himself, will not be disposed to rely implicitly on the opinion of others, or to surrender his judgment at the demand of opinionative dogmatism.

While he will gratefully receive and acknowledge the aid of others, in correcting his opinions and extending his views, he will be in no danger of resembling those "who resign their judgment to the last man they hear or read; who, cameleon-like, take the colour of what is laid before them, and as soon lose and resign it to the next that happens to come in their way."

The disposition which best qualifies for successful investigation is admirably exhibited in the following passage, by Dr. Thomas Brown: "It is a spirit quick to pursue whatever is within the reach of human intellect; but is not less quick to discern the bounds that limit every human inquiry; and which, therefore, in seeking much, seeks only what man may learn:—which knows how to distinguish what is just in itself from what is merely accredited by illustrious names;—but which, at the same time, alive, with congenial feeling, to every intellectual excellence, and candid to the weakness from which no excellence is wholly privileged, can dissent and confute without triumph, as it admires without envy."

VII.

Avail yourselves of the assistance of others, whether tutors, associates, or authors, only so far as to obtain the aid actually requisite, and not to supersede the utmost efforts of your own minds.

The question perpetually arising in the mind of the student of remiss and indolent habits is—How shall I facilitate my labour by obtaining assistance from others? The question equally familiar to the mind of the student athirst for knowledge, and willing to acquire it at the expense of exertion is—How shall I accomplish my object with the *least* assistance from others? It is not difficult to predict the tendency and result of either habit of mind. By the one, the intellectual character is degraded and enfeebled; by the other, it attains dignity and elevation, energy and self-command. He who always does his best will usually do well, and often more than well; and if he fail occasionally to accomplish his object, his failure will neither be accompanied by self-reproach, nor followed by a relaxation of effort. The assistance which is within his reach, he will resolutely decline,

till his best energies have been put forth: he has been initiated into the habit of applying himself to grapple with a difficulty: a difficulty which appeared formidable when viewed at a distance, with only a transient glance, has often been conquered by the first encounter; and in a better cause than that on which the exclamation was first made, he has been prepared to say "*veni, vidi, vici.*" Or if a vigorous, patient, and persevering investigation was requisite, he has at length entered into the recompense of him who expressed the delight of no ordinary mind, when he exclaimed εὕρηκα.

VIII.

Be not only willing, but desirous, to have every Defect in your powers, attainments, and productions, fully and explicitly pointed out.

The disclosure may be unwelcome; it may be even unexpected; but it will be salutary. It may be conducive to the interests as well of intellectual as of moral culture. A capacity which appears contracted may be farther developed,—may be greatly expanded; attainments, which at present disappoint expectation, may be considerably augmented; and the productions

which may justly be regarded as unfavourable specimens of intellectual effort, may supply materials of comparison with future exercises, from which may be derived the most cheering encouragement.

It is one of the many advantages arising from association with other students in a public seminary, that such defects are rendered apparent to the individuals by whom they are displayed. The cultivation of the understanding may doubtless be carried on in the absence of living instructors, and without associates in study. Books may supply, in part, the want of tutors, and plodding diligence may amass stores of knowledge in the deepest seclusion; but then the means are wanting, not only of abridging unnecessary labour, and removing formidable obstructions, but also of detecting those defects of knowledge, those prejudices of early education, those mistaken notions, those injurious habits, those numerous errors and blemishes of performance, which might never have become apparent to the individuals themselves.

To receive with docility and with gratitude the exposure of our own defects and mistakes

is an attainment of no small value. It has a beneficial influence in restraining us from thinking more highly of our talents and of our productions than we ought to think, and it renders even the detection of our defects an excitement to intellectual progress, and a means of moral improvement.

IX.

Let your plan of Study, and the arrangement for the distribution of your Time, be judiciously formed, and prosecuted with the utmost diligence and punctuality.

The beneficial effect of order and regularity in the discharge of engagements, especially when a variety of objects may demand attention, must be in some degree apparent to every one. To the student, not less than to the man of business, is regularity of method important in the arrangement of his pursuits; as it prevents loss of time by embarrassing suspense, with regard to the object which, at any given hour, claims immediate attention. Even a plan of arrangement, in some respects defective and objectionable, would secure to a student a decided advantage over another individual, who should

disregard order and method; incalculable then must be the benefit arising from regulations, which proceed on wise and enlightened principles. A few suggestions on this point may be deserving of notice.

1. Let not the plan laid down be so difficult of observance, as to incur the danger of frequent failure or irregularity.

It is wise for us to consider, not only what we could *wish* to accomplish, but also what it is *probable* that, with our habits, and in our circumstances, we shall be *able* to effect. By attempting too much, we often accomplish less than we should have effected, with plans guided by principles of greater moderation; and one reason which may be assigned for this is, that after having repeatedly fallen short of the line prescribed, our plans cease to have authority in our own estimation, lose their practical influence on the distribution of our time, and having thus been *virtually*, they are at length *avowedly* abandoned.

2. Let the proportion of time and attention devoted to every object of study be regulated by a regard both to its *real* and to its *relative* importance.

3. Let the most important studies be assigned to those hours in which we find, by experience, that we can exert our intellectual energies with the greatest facility and intensity.

4. Let the minor intervals of time which precede or follow the more important engagements be duly and economically improved.

How many valuable acquisitions may be secured by filling up, with appropriate reading, the moments of occasional and uncertain leisure, which Boyle calls "the parentheses or interludes of time. These, coming between more important engagements, are wont to be lost by most men for want of a value for them; and even by good men for want of skill to preserve them. And as some goldsmiths and refiners are wont to save the very sweepings of their shops, because they may contain in them some filings or dust of gold and silver, I see not why a christian may not be as careful, not to lose the fragments of a thing incomparably more precious."

X.

Guard against those Mental Habits which may be eventually though imperceptibly preju-

dicial, by impairing the vigour of the Mind or of the Body.

Of these several may be distinctly specified:—

1. Undue continuance of studious exertion and mental excitement.

The opinion has been publicly expressed by a Professor of eminence in a northern University, that no man can habitually apply his mind to *intense study* during more than six hours in the day, without injury to his health. This opinion, be it remembered, applies to the determined energy of mental application in severe study; and if to six hours of serious study be added three or four hours of such reading as conveys instruction, without inducing any consciousness of fatigue, the student will have made near approaches to that line, beyond which to trespass is compatible neither with safety nor with duty.

Let not the young and ardent adventurer in the path of knowledge imagine, that, by the omission of the hours due to sleep, and to bodily exercise, he can be a gainer upon the whole. How many distressing instances have there been in which it has too plainly appeared,

that undue exertion and excitement are determined even a vigorous constitution, and incompatible for the performance of those duties on which a course of study is the immediate preparation. And should these facts seem not to require still it may be shown, that undue application defeats the object in view, and violates the principles of calculating progressive exertion. In all intellectual as well as in mechanical labours, the work accomplished must be in proportion to the power exerted. But the power which the mind can put forth in any state depends upon a variety of circumstances among which are to be included, its freedom from exhaustion and depression, and from those disabilities to which it will be subject if the nerves and spirits be impaired. No hesitation can there be in hazarding the assertion, that in the experiment of a month or a year, it will be found, that the student will actually accomplish more of intellectual labour, in ten hours of daily study, with two hours of bodily exercise and recreation, than he could effect in twelve hours without such intermission.

2. An undue eagerness of desire to complete any performance within a given time.

The tranquil exercise of thought may be carried on with energy for a considerable time, without inducing mental weariness or occasioning effects injurious to health. Very different, however, are the effects of study, when pursued with any degree of anxiety or perturbation, and especially when accompanied with a restless and impatient eagerness to complete the performance, or to accomplish, in a given time, a certain task which we have prescribed. There are, indeed, minds habitually inclined to indolence or to procrastination, which derive benefit from the stimulus arising from such a requirement; but when the stimulus arising from other considerations is sufficiently powerful, that additional excitement may become highly injurious. They who feel the pressure of numerous engagements are frequently too eager to complete the literary labour in which they are employed, before they proceed to another pursuit, to which either the plan of study or the call of duty may require their immediate attention; and the hurried attempt will either, by undue despatch, be unfavourable to the performance itself, or by the disquieting anxiety induced, be injurious to the corporeal frame. It is related of Mr. John

Wesley, that when a reference, on one occasion, was made to his numerous avocations, he replied, —"Though I am always in haste, I am never in a hurry, because I never undertake more work than I can go through with perfect calmness of spirit."

3. An inability to transfer the attention with ease from one subject to another; or, when it is desirable, to unbend and recreate the mind.

The love of variety, of novelty, and of relief from continued efforts of thought, renders it easy for the undisciplined mind to dismiss from its notice a subject to which its attention has been directed. But in proportion as habits of fixed and persevering attention are cultivated, and feelings of interest in the pursuit of knowledge are awakened, it becomes difficult to disengage the mind, at pleasure, from any subject of consideration. Yet this want of control over the thoughts and energies of the mind is at once unfavourable to progress in knowledge, to the enjoyment of the pleasures of social intercourse, and to that entire recreation of mind, by which it is prepared to renew, with increased energy, its application to severe study. It is most desirable, for reasons sufficiently obvious, to cultivate

vivacity and cheerfulness of disposition; and, in order to this, it is of no small importance to be able to withdraw the mind, at pleasure, from pursuits which, by their continuance, occasion fatigue and abstraction, and to yield to the full impression of surrounding objects or of enlivening conversation.

It is related by Count Segur, as a characteristic trait of the late Emperor Napoleon, that he possessed the faculty of "throwing aside the most important occupations whenever he pleased; either for the sake of variety or of rest; for in him the power of volition surpassed that of imagination. In this respect he reigned over himself as much as he did over others."

XI.

Let it be your constant aim to arrive at general Principles, on all the subjects to which your attention is directed.

Without the guidance of general principles, the human mind resembles a vessel at sea, without chart, or compass, or pilot. It must fluctuate in doubt and uncertainty; and amidst the agitations of conflicting sentiments, it must be at the

mercy of almost every wind of opinion, and unprepared to encounter the rising wave of opposition. In every department of human knowledge, whether of literature or of science, whether of reason or of revelation, there are certain fixed principles—certain general truths, from which we must set out in our researches, and by which we must be guided in our reasonings. To borrow the language of Mr. Locke, "there are fundamental truths that lie at the bottom, the basis upon which a great many others rest, and in which they have their consistency. These are teeming truths, rich in store, with which they furnish the mind, and like the lights of heaven, are not only beautiful and entertaining in themselves, but give light and evidence to other things, that, without them, could not be seen or known. Such is that admirable discovery of Newton, that all bodies gravitate to one another, which may be counted the basis of natural philosophy. Our Saviour's great rule—'that we should love our neighbour as ourselves,' is such a fundamental truth, for the regulating human society, that, I think, by that alone, one might, without difficulty, determine all the cases and doubts in social morality. These, and such

as these, are the truths we should endeavour to find out and store our minds with."——" We should accustom ourselves, in any question proposed, to examine and find out upon what it bottoms. Most of the difficulties that come in our way, when well considered and traced, lead us to some proposition which, known to be true, clears the doubt, and gives an easy solution of the question."

XII.

Be not satisfied with the Knowledge you have acquired on any subject of Investigation, till you can express the result of your Inquiries and Reflections in your own words, either in Conversation or in Writing.

The attempt to convey our ideas to others is the most satisfactory test by which we may ascertain their correctness or inaccuracy—their completeness or deficiency. Nothing is more common than for those whose minds are undisciplined, to flatter themselves that they have a competent acquaintance with a subject, on which their ideas are still obscure and confused, and on which they betray obscurity and confusion, as soon as they

attempt the communication of their knowledge to others. It is therefore of great importance in seminaries of education, that an account may should be applied by the tutor, to direct the whole progress of study, both by exercising a strict examination on the course of reading prescribed, and by requiring frequent exercises in composition on the subjects to which attention has been directed. On the same principle it would be found highly beneficial, were those who are associated in a studious career, to bring each other to the test by mutual examination, and by conversing freely on points of importance and of difficulty. It would be too much to assert, that, in every instance, where there is clearness of conception, there will be facility of expression, since there may be causes of embarrassment in the attempt to convey ideas, which do not arise from the obscurity of the ideas themselves: but where no such causes are in operation, it may be presumed, that confusion of language has its origin in confusion of thought, and that we ought not to give ourselves credit for a competent acquaintance with any subject, till we can convey our ideas on that subject with precision and perspicuity.

"My method of study," said President Edwards, "has been very much by writing; applying myself in this way to improve every important hint; pursuing the clue to my utmost when any thing in reading, meditation, or conversation has been suggested to my mind, that seemed to promise light on any weighty point; thus penning what appeared to me my best thoughts on innumerable subjects, for my own benefit. The longer I prosecuted my studies in this method, the more habitual it became, and the more pleasant and profitable I found it. The further I travelled in this way, the wider the field opened."

PART II.

"THE Improvement of the Understanding," observes Mr. Locke, "is for two ends; first, for our own increase of knowledge; secondly, to enable us to deliver that knowledge to others. The latter of these, if it be not the chief end of study in a gentleman; yet it is at least equal to the other, since the greatest part of his business and usefulness in the world is by the influence of what he says, or writes to others."

Now if even to those who are not engaged in any department of professional life, it be so important to acquire a facility in the communication of knowledge, how much more important must be that attainment to those, whose official duty it is, to convey to the minds of men, in various classes of society, knowledge of incomparable value.

I proceed, then, to offer

HINTS TO AID THE CULTIVATION OF MENTAL HABITS, WITH A VIEW TO THE COMMUNICATION OF KNOWLEDGE IN THE ENGAGEMENTS OF THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY.

For the sake of convenient arrangement, I shall distribute the advices I have to suggest under three general divisions:

I shall endeavour to exhibit—The Importance of still pursuing with diligence Plans of Mental Improvement, after terminating the Course of Academic Discipline:—The Course of Study which it is most important to pursue in the earlier stages of the Christian Ministry:—and, The best method of conducting direct Preparations for the Pulpit.

I.

THE IMPORTANCE OF STILL PURSUING WITH DILIGENCE PLANS OF MENTAL IMPROVEMENT, AFTER TERMINATING THE COURSE OF ACADEMIC DISCIPLINE.

I. *It would be absurd for a Student to imagine, that on quitting the College, and entering on the active duties of the Christian Ministry,*

he has "finished his studies," when in truth they are but commenced.

The foundation only is laid—the superstructure you have yet to rear. Only the elements of knowledge have you at present attained: let these first principles stimulate, not satisfy, your desire of knowledge; let them guide, not limit your researches. You have in some degree acquired, but you have not yet matured the intellectual habits essential to the due discharge of the office on which you now enter. You are now arrived at a critical period in the history of your mind. It is now to be determined, whether, in respect of mental energy and attainments, you are to remain stationary, with self-reproach and merited disgrace, or to prosecute, with ardour, a course of unremitted application and honourable proficiency.

Can you hesitate to admit the necessity of blending the character of the Student with that of the Minister? Are you prepared to specify the branches of academic study in which you have already arrived at a competency of knowledge? Let it even be granted, that in some of your literary and scientific pursuits you have

attained a proficiency, at once respectable and valuable; and let it be conceded, that farther advances in some of these studies can scarcely be regarded as compatible with the avocations on which you now enter. Still, must you not be compelled to acknowledge, that there are other studies of primary importance, in which, with your advantages, it would be culpable not to make strenuous and habitual exertions, with a view to farther progress? How powerful are the considerations which urge you to the diligent investigation of the sacred Scriptures—to the constant study of the languages in which they were originally written—and, to the accumulation, from various sources, of that knowledge by which they may be explained, illustrated, and defended.

II. *The importance of the object at which the Christian Ministry aims peremptorily requires the most strenuous and diligent Improvement of the Mental Powers.*

"How high and awful a function is that which proposes to establish in the soul an interior dominion—to illuminate its powers by

a celestial light—and introduce it to an intimate, ineffable, and unchanging alliance with the Father of Spirits. The moment we permit ourselves to think lightly of the Christian Ministry, our right arm is withered; nothing but imbecility and relaxation remains. For no man ever excelled in a profession to which he did not feel an attachment bordering on enthusiasm; though what in other professions is enthusiasm, is, in ours, the dictate of sobriety and truth."*

They who enter on this arduous and responsible office are understood to give, and usually give, in terms the most explicit, and with assurances the most solemn, a pledge, that they will devote to its momentous labours their best talents and their assiduous exertions. Nothing less than this is due to the God whom we serve, the cause in which we have embarked, and the individuals who attach themselves to our Ministry. If the pledge be given, and the obligation be sacred, conscience is deeply concerned in endeavouring to redeem it with inviolable fidelity and constancy. There may be, on the

* Sermon on the Discouragements and Supports of the Christian Minister, by the Rev. Robert Hall.

part of some, a facility in the discharge of public duties, arising from talents of a superior order, or at least of a peculiar adaptation to certain engagements; but this by no means exonerates them, even in the slightest degree, from the duty of improving, by unremitted diligence, the talents they possess. If to them more be given, of them more will be required.

III. *The Difficulties which are to be encountered in the discharge of the Christian Ministry require the most vigorous exertions, and the most diligent application.*

The difficulties to which I refer are of an intellectual kind, and arise especially from three sources:

(1.) *The diversity of mental character prevailing in the auditories we address.*

It is the just remark of Dr. Campbell, in his Philosophy of Rhetoric, that "the more mixed the auditory is, the greater is the difficulty of speaking to them with effect. The preacher has therefore a more delicate part to perform than either the pleader or the senator. The auditors, though rarely so accomplished as to

require the same accuracy of composition, or acuteness in reasoning as may be expected in the other two, are more various in age, rank, taste, inclinations, sentiments, and prejudices." "To men of various casts and complexions, it is obvious," observes Mr. Hall, "a corresponding difference in the selection of topics and the method of appeal is requisite. Some are only capable of digesting the first principles of religion, on whom it is necessary often to inculcate the same lessons, with the reiteration of parental solicitude: there are others of a wider grasp of comprehension, who must be indulged with an ampler variety, and to whom views of religion less obvious, less obtrusive, and demanding a more vigorous exercise of the understanding, are peculiarly adapted. Some are accustomed to contemplate every subject in a light so cool and argumentative, that they are not easily impressed with any thing which is not presented in the garb of reasoning;—there are others of a softer temperament, who are more easily won by tender strokes of pathos." *

After such quotations, it is assuredly sufficient simply to ask the question, whether any

* Sermon before cited.

preacher, and especially any young preacher, can imagine himself qualified to contend with difficulties so formidable, without habits of studious consideration and deep reflection?

(2.) *The weighty and frequent demands made upon the Mental Resources of a Christian Minister in the present day.*

In the discharge of his stated duties on the Sabbath, and of the frequent engagements which arise out of the excitement of benevolent activity in the present day, how heavy are the demands upon the time and talents and attainments of the Christian Minister! With a limited degree of opportunity for preparation, on what a variety of subjects he has to discourse,—what a versatility of thought he has occasion to display. How much he needs—an ample store of general principles, on almost all subjects interesting to the heart of man—well-digested views of the whole system of revealed truth—familiarity with the most important points of Biblical Criticism—and materials derived from almost all the sources of human knowledge, in order to present to his hearers, rich, diversified and interesting materials of illustration, to whatever subject he invites their regard. Surely qualifications for

such engagements are not to be expected without extensive reading and perpetual application.

(3.) *The increased circulation of Knowledge, both literary and scientific, among various classes of society.*

It is naturally expected that a Minister should be superior to most of his hearers, not only in his knowledge of the Scriptures, but also in mental culture and literary attainments. To secure, by a wide interval, that superiority, was formerly by no means difficult for those Ministers who had enjoyed the advantages of a liberal education. In the present day this is not so easy a task. In most congregations there are not a few who have been versed in the principles of literature and of science, and who are qualified to detect inaccuracies of thought or expression, which might formerly have passed without notice. It should be deeply impressed upon the mind of every Minister, when he embarks on his professional course, that as the standard of information among all classes is perpetually rising, the standard of learning and of talent among the Ministers of the Gospel must be raised at least in an equal degree.

sermons, and very little more, when there are so many books to be read, and so many matters that we should not be unacquainted with. Nay, in the study of our sermons we are too negligent, gathering only a few naked heads, and not considering of the most forcible expressions by which we should set them home to men's hearts! We must study how to convince and get within men, and how to bring each truth to the quick, and not leave all this to our extemporary promptitude, unless it be in cases of necessity. Certainly, brethren, experience will teach you, that men are not made learned or wise without hard study and unwearied labours."

Let those labours, however, have a right direction, that there may be no labour lost. Let them have a bearing, more or less direct, upon the proper engagements of the Christian Ministry.

The sacred office, both from its arduousness and from its importance, is abundantly sufficient to employ, in its own proper pursuits, the full energy of the most powerful and capacious mind. To the Christian Minister, more pointedly than to any man engaged in secular

avocations, the weighty remark of Mr. Cecil applies:—"Every man should aim to do one thing well. If he dissipates his attention on several objects, he may have excellent talents intrusted to him, but they will be intrusted to no good end. Concentrated on his proper object, they might have a vast energy; but dissipated on several they will have none. Let other objects be pursued indeed; but only so far as they may subserve the main purpose. By neglecting this rule, I have seen frivolity and futility written on minds of great power; and by regarding it, I have seen very limited minds acting in the first rank of their profession—I have seen a large capital and a great stock dissipated, and I have seen a small capital and stock improved to great riches."

"Give attendance to reading" is the Scripture rule for Ministerial Study. "Mr. Scott explains it as refering to the study of the Scriptures, or of any other books which could add to the fund of profitable knowledge. In an earlier period of life, he candidly confesses that his notions on these subjects were too contracted. Mature consideration, however, formed his studious life upon more enlarged

principles, which he never failed strongly to inculcate upon young men under his care and influence, marking at the same time, the importance of a due subordination to the main end. A minister of the present day said once to a friend who found him reading Gibbon's History, that he read every thing with a particular view to his ministry, and that he collected some materials for the pulpit from books of almost every description." *

I now proceed to offer some specific advices,

II.

ON THE COURSE OF STUDY, WITH A VIEW TO MENTAL IMPROVEMENT, WHICH IT IS MOST IMPORTANT TO PURSUE, IN THE EARLIER STAGES OF THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY.

Shall I render myself liable to the charge of indulging unfounded and illiberal suspicions, with regard to any of my brethren, if I venture to express a fear, that some allow too much of

* See the Rev. C. Bridges on the Christian Ministry—an admirable work, to which the Author of these Hints gratefully acknowledges himself to have been repeatedly indebted in preparing for the press the present enlarged edition.

their valuable time to be frittered away in the perusal of miscellaneous and periodical publications. These, judiciously selected, may afford interesting and advantageous occupation for hours of leisure, and intervals of relaxation from serious study; but on these the student should not think himself authorised to enter, till by *hours* of *application* he has entitled himself to *moments* of *leisure*. Incalculable and irretrievable will be the loss he will sustain, if he allow his mornings and his evenings to be expended in the perusal of light and ephemeral productions. By no means would I discourage an attention, duly limited and regulated, to the various departments of polite literature. From works of taste and imagination, carefully selected, the mind may reap not delight only but improvement. Poetry, eloquence, and criticism have their *claims* as well as their *attractions;* but let the student yield to their attractions only in proportion to their claims, and let their claims be submitted to the decision of an enlightened judgment and a conscience feelingly alive.

The *first* object which claims the attention of a student and a minister, in his course of

reading, is *the study of the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures.* Whatever may be the limits within which multiplied engagements may require this to be contracted, let it be a part of the business of every day. In your academic efforts, it may be presumed, you have at least conquered the most formidable difficulties in the acquisition of these languages. How much to be lamented would it be, should you suspend your application, just at the point at which you were about to receive the recompense of your toilsome initiation. If you make no farther progress, your past labour will be productive of but little advantage; and if you neglect the frequent and habitual reading of the Scriptures in the original, you will lose much of that which you have already acquired. Surely you ought not to be satisfied without attaining a facility in reading the Hebrew Bible and the Greek Testament—such a facility as will remove all temptations to neglect the study—as will render it easy to avail yourselves of the critical labours of others—as will authorize you to place some confidence in your own opinion on points on which critics and commentators disagree—and will render the perusal of the

Scriptures in the original sufficiently easy, to be adopted with advantage for the purposes of devotional improvement.

A *second* course of reading on which I would lay stress, is one of which the leading object should be *the extension of those branches of knowledge, for which a demand is chiefly made in the exercise of your official functions.*

If the senator should be well versed in the history of his country, its constitution, and the sources of national prosperity; if the lawyer should be intimately conversant with the system of jurisprudence and the enactments of the legislature; if the physician should be well skilled in the knowledge of diseases and the remedies which they require; surely a minister of religion should be equally solicitous to attain an extensive and accurate acquaintance with that system of truth which it is the business of his life to teach and to inculcate. On a great variety of subjects his knowledge must of necessity be superficial; but on those in which he undertakes to appear in the character of a public instructor, his knowledge should be accurate, if not profound. With this view, the energy of his mind should be directed to the

study of the volume of revelation; nor can he be deemed excusable unless he avail himself, to the full extent of his means and opportunities, of those aids which are so abundantly supplied, both by ancient and modern writers. A specification of the works which especially merit attention falls not within the compass of my present design. Suffice it to say, that those which are of principal importance may be included under the heads of Biblical Criticism—Theology, Polemical and Practical—Jewish Antiquities and Ecclesiastical History.

From the study of Ecclesiastical History, observes Dr. Dwight, the Theological student will derive advantages similar to those which the statesman derives from civil history. "He will learn what the church has been; why it has thus been; and how in many respects it may be rendered better and happier."—It need only be added, says Mr. Bridges, "that Mosheim will furnish the requisite information respecting the visible church, and Milner respecting the real church."

To this course of reading may be added, with great advantage, the Study of the Human Mind, in reference to which I adduce with

cordial approbation the words of an anonymous writer:—

"As we conceive that no science can be of more importance to the preacher, so we are apt to think that no science is more commonly neglected; and hence it arises, on the one hand, that the class of men, who, by their continued professional scrutiny of the minds of others might be expected to throw most light upon this department of science, are very small contributors to it; and on the other, that if any of them are anxious for that species of knowledge more immediately bearing on their profession, they know not where to seek it. The fruits of all this in theology are much of the same kind as if military men were to forswear the subject of military tactics, and physicians that of medicine. It is indeed difficult to conceive to what an amount the usefulness of Sermons is impaired by ignorance of the human mind. We apprehend that nothing in Scripture itself is more apt to touch and affect the heart, than what has been termed its 'power of divination;' or in other words, that perspicacity by which it exhibits what is in the heart of the hearer, and reveals the man to himself.

And an intimate acquaintance with the powers, habits and workings of the mind, would, to a certain extent, supply the preacher with a talisman of the same kind. We should stand before him convicted, rebuked, and condemned; and often under the influence of the Holy Spirit, who delights to work by rational means on rational creatures, should be led to exclaim, that 'God was with him of a truth.'" *

A *third* course of reading should be pursued with a view to *devotional excitement, and the cultivation of personal religion.*

Let it ever be remembered, that the character of the christian is not to be merged in the official avocations of the minister. A solicitous regard to the interests of personal piety should every day of life take the lead of all other concerns. Nor can it be supposed, that the mind can be duly qualified for the spiritual and elevated duties of the christian ministry, unless the religion of the heart be cultivated with watchful care. In addition to the devotional study of the Holy Scriptures, great advantage may be derived from the habit of

* See Critique on the Rev. C. Simeon's Horæ Homileticæ, in the Christian Observer—Nov. 1820.

allotting a certain limited portion of time, every day, to a course of reading, for the purposes of religious improvement. Some of the writings of the old divines may be read with this view, with incalculable advantage; nor is any species of reading more beneficial in promoting at once devotional excitement and professional diligence, than the biography of distinguished christians, and of ministers eminent for piety and usefulness. I fully concur with Mr. Bridges in the opinion that "more lessons of practical detail and encouragement may be learnt from this branch of study than from whole treatises of abstract theology. Such lives as those of Leighton, Alleine, Philip Henry, Halyburton, Cotton Mather, Elliot, Brainerd, Doddridge, Martyn, Scott and Richmond are of the highest value and consideration.

On the most profitable method of reading, I would offer a few remarks.

"Reading," observes Mr. Locke, "furnishes the mind only with materials of knowledge; it is thinking makes what we read ours. We are of the ruminating kind, and it is not enough to cram ourselves with a great load of collections:—there are indeed in some writers visible

instances of deep thoughts, close and acute reasoning, and ideas well pursued. The light these would give would be of great use, if their reader would observe and imitate them;—but that can be done only by our own meditation."

In the spirit of these remarks it may be observed, that the materials of knowledge which we obtain by reading, should undergo a mental process of digestion, so as to be incorporated with our own ideas, and to augment the strength and resources of our own minds. In proportion as the mind thus adds to its stores of knowledge, instead of being burdened by its accumulations, its capacity of reception and of retention becomes expanded.—"New Knowledge," observes Maclaurin, "does not consist so much in our having access to a new object, as in comparing it with others already known, observing its relations to them, or discerning what it has in common with them, and wherein their disparity consists; and, therefore, our knowledge is vastly greater than the sum of what all its objects separately could afford; and when a new object comes within our reach, the addition to our knowledge is the greater,

the more we already know; so that it increases, not as the new objects increase, but in a much higher proportion."*

"Read not," said Lord Bacon, "with a design to contradict and to engage in disputes, nor yet to take all for granted, nor to set off yourself in discourse; but learn to weigh, and to use your judgment. Some books there are which it is convenient just to taste, others that we ought to swallow quickly, and some, but those are very few, that we should digest: that is, some books are to be looked into only in parts; others to be read indeed, but in a cursory manner; and some few to be turned over diligently and with singular attention. Reading gives a fund of universal knowledge; disputation and conference, acuteness and eloquence; writing and collecting of notes imprints what we read on the mind, and fixes it deep. And therefore if a man is careless in noting, he had need have a good memory: if he confers little, he should have a present wit; and if he reads little, there is nothing left, but to use a kind of artifice, whereby he may seem to know what he does not."

* See his View of Newton's Discoveries.

Some persons attach great importance to the habit of keeping a common-place book, for the purpose of inserting copious extracts with which they meet in the course of their reading. This plan appears to me to be advisable only when the passage is pre-eminently valuable, and the book in which it occurs is not usually accessible. In other cases, the method appears liable to numerous and weighty objections. It requires an expenditure of time for which no equivalent is received, by the slight impression produced in the mere act of transcribing. We deceive ourselves greatly by imagining it is made our own, merely because it is entered in our *collectanea*, since it is uncertain whether we may ever read it again. If the book we are reading be in our own possession, it may be advantageous to mark in the margin, passages which demand a second or a repeated perusal, and to enter in a book, alphabetically arranged, a reference to the passage, under an appropriate title. We should thus obtain, by degrees, a valuable index to the most important contents of the books in our possession, which have obtained a careful perusal.

I have now to suggest a few Hints of Advice in reference to—

III.

THE BEST METHOD OF CONDUCTING DIRECT PREPARATION FOR THE PULPIT.

I. *Remember the influence of devotional excitement on the operations of the intellect, when employed on spiritual subjects, and the importance of obtaining that Divine Aid which the Scriptures encourage us to expect.*

"Offer up your daily requests to God, the Father of lights, that he would bless all your attempts and labours in reading and in study. Think with yourself, how easily and how insensibly, by one turn of thought, he can lead you into a large scene of useful ideas: he can teach you to lay hold on a clue which may guide your thoughts with safety and ease through all the difficulties of an intricate subject.——He expects to be acknowledged in the common affairs of life, and he does as certainly expect it in the superior operations of the mind; and in the

search of knowledge and truth.—Bishop Sanderson says, that study without prayer is atheism, as well as that prayer without study is presumption. *Bene orasse est bene studuisse.*" *

"For a man solemnly to undertake," observes Dr. Owen, "the interpretation of any portion of scripture, without invocation of God, to be taught and instructed by his Spirit, is a high provocation of him; nor shall I expect the discovery of truth from any one who thus proudly engages in a work so much above his ability."

"The Spirit by his unction," says Quesnel, "is the great master in this science, and it is by prayer, that we become his scholars. Much prayer and little study advance the work of God more than abundance of study without prayer."

It is said to have been the practice of Luther, even in the midst of his most pressing avocations, to devote three hours every day to direct communion with God.

It was the *resolution* of Dr. Cotton Mather to retire for prayer at least three times every day; and it is recorded by his biographer that

* Dr. Watts's Improvement of the Mind.

his *custom* was to pray not less than six times in the day, in addition to the habit of ejaculatory aspirations which were usually repeated many times in the course of every hour. "It was his practice also from his fourteenth year almost to his death to keep a private fast, or a day of more than ordinary devotion, at least once a month, as well as days of solemn thanksgivings to God for his mercies."

The duties of a christian minister are spiritual duties, and require therefore spiritual and devotional habits of thought and feeling. If the state of mind correspond with the character of the subjects on which intellectual energy is to be employed, the employment becomes easy and delightful; if otherwise, it is difficult, if not irksome. The hours expended in the preparation of discourses for the pulpit may, on these principles, be either among the most happy, or the most distressing, of studious life. Under the influence of devotional excitement, with what clearness, and with what beauty may an interesting passage of the word of God unfold its meaning to the eye of the mind. It becomes at once a source of spiritual delight and a theme for pulpit discussion. The truths it inculcates

or involves, present themselves in quick succession to the meditating mind, and seem to arrange themselves, without difficulty, in an order the most natural and correct.

II. *Study the true meaning of the word of God, in your daily perusal of the sacred volume, and yield your mind and heart to the influence of the truths you read.*

"I have found it advantageous," remarks Mr. Scott, "sometimes to read the Scriptures with such exactness, as to weigh every expression, as if I were about to preach on every verse, and then to apply the result to my own case, character, experience, and conduct, as if it had been directly addressed to me; in short to make the passages into a kind of sermons, as if about to preach to others, and then to turn the whole application on myself. At other times I have read a passage more generally, and then selected two or three of the most important observations from it, and endeavoured to employ my mind in meditation on them, and consider how they bore on the state of my heart, or on my past life, or on those things which I heard or

observed, in the world or the church, and to compare them with the variety of sentiments, experiences, actions or prominent characters, with which we become gradually more and more acquainted." He who sets out on this plan, proves that he has already "the beginning of wisdom," and that he is on his way towards no ordinary attainments.

"Nothing sanctifies and saves but truth. The Holy Bible is the only storehouse of religious doctrine. An implicit and silent submission of the whole soul of a minister to the revealed will of the eternal and incomprehensible God, is indispensable to any enlarged success. Inspired men spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost—handed down to a lost world all the Revelation which Infinite Wisdom saw needful and best, and in the manner and form which was most suitable to the designs of God and the state of man—delivered to the church unmixed, and absolutely pure truth, without any defect, any omission, any superfluity, any exaggeration, any mistake—leaving us the standard of all doctrine, the rule of all practice, the example of all holiness. Such is the BIBLE—the interpretation

of which, and the application to the cases of men, is left as a solemn trust with the stewards of Christ's mysteries. Brethren, a revival of religion must spring from a revival of the authority of the Bible, a revival of the unlimited sovereignty of the INSPIRED BOOK, in overruling all the errors of men, in swaying every heart, in governing and curbing every imagination, in deciding every controversy, in being itself the element and matter of all our instructions in public and private. The Divine medicine must not be adulterated and weakened by the admixtures of man; or our maladies will never be cured. The cup of salvation must not be corrupted with 'the wine of Sodom, and the grapes of Gomorrah;' or the wounds of men will remain unhealed. We must return to our Bibles.*"

III. *Endeavour to connect Mental Improvement and Acquisitions of Knowledge with your ordinary preparations for the Pulpit.*

The young preacher should by no means

* See the Rev. Daniel Wilson's Introductory Essay to "the Reformed Pastor."

think it sufficient, to make that preparation for his appearance in the pulpit, which he supposes will be deemed adequate and respectable, by those who attend on his ministry. To satisfy *himself* should be with him an object of much more difficult attainment, under ordinary circumstances, than to satisfy his hearers; and he should not allow himself to be satisfied, unless he has so conducted his preparation of discourses, as to have made some addition to his store of valuable ideas, or at least to have made some progress in the cultivation of useful habits of thought and of expression.

There are several plans by which this improvement may be secured; some of which I will suggest.—

(1.) *Pursue, when opportunity occurs, those inquiries which may incidentally arise out of the texts or the subjects which you are studying, with a view to public discourses.*

Let not a spirit of indolence restrict your inquiries on any important points, because you are aware that no reference to such points is necessary in the discourse you may be preparing. Those points may have an important bearing on a variety of subjects, and the investigation may

tend to enrich your mind by the addition of important knowledge, or at least to preserve you from injurious prejudices and mistakes. Much, very much, I conceive, of the knowledge by which superior minds are distinguished has been accumulated by the habit now recommended. Scarcely has any subject, especially in their earlier studies, employed their thoughts, without prompting some inquiries on points, on which they were impatient to acquire more correct or more extensive information. Had not those wishes excited them to embrace the earliest opportunities of investigation, that knowledge would probably never have been attained. With a view to the practicability of this extended and liberal plan of studying discourses for the pulpit, as well as for other reasons afterwards to be considered, it is of great importance to allow, for such preparations, time sufficiently ample to prevent the necessity of eager and inconsiderate haste, with the entire omission and neglect of all inquiries not absolutely essential to the composition of the proposed discourse.

(2.) *Consult the best authors to whose works you have access, who have written on the subject which you propose to discuss.*

It is indeed advisable previously to your having recourse to the wealth of other minds, to make a vigorous demand upon the stores of your own mind; but having done this, you may with great advantage have recourse to the productions of men of superior intellect and attainments. This method is by no means to be adopted, with a view to suspend or to diminish your own intellectual labour, but, on the contrary, to secure several important advantages which I will specify:—

It will give excitement to the mind, and rouse it to a state of higher energy and activity.—It will present ample materials for thought and reflection; and should the mind fix, with a vigorous grasp, only on some one interesting thought, that single idea may be the first of a train, which will give a character and a value to the whole discourse.—It will give additional amplitude, richness, and vividness to many of the illustrations which your own mind might have suggested in part, but with much less power of exciting interest and impression: it will also serve to give additional confidence in the expression of your own opinion.

(3.) *Be not satisfied with selecting detached*

texts and miscellaneous subjects, but, in addition to these, enter on a course of expository lectures, and a series of connected discourses.

The method now recommended will be at once instructive to the hearers, and highly conducive to the improvement of the preacher. It will prevent the wearisome and fruitless expenditure of time in searching after subjects of discourse—it will supply many interesting topics which might not otherwise engage the attention—it will habituate the mind of the minister of truth, to investigate with diligence the exact meaning of every part of Scripture which he undertakes to interpret—and it will stimulate most powerfully to vigorous thought, extensive reading, and biblical researches.

It is possible that some preachers may hesitate to adopt the plans now recommended, from the fear of their proving unpopular, and failing to excite sufficient interest. Let the inquiry then be made,—Have they tried the experiment? Have they pursued the plan with the spirit and the application it requires? Have they adopted a judicious selection of subjects? In expounding the Scriptures, have they made choice of such books or chapters, as were best

adapted to their own mental resources and to the circumstances of their hearers? Have they been sufficiently anxious to combine instruction with impression; and while they endeavoured to convey knowledge to the understanding, has it been also their assiduous attempt to awaken the conscience and to affect the heart? If these objects are kept in view in the conduct of expository lectures, and the discussion of connected subjects, the interest excited in the minds of the hearers, instead of being diminished, will be most sensibly augmented.

(4.) *Let the subjects and the texts intended for the discourses of the succeeding Sabbath be selected early in the week.*

I envy not the preacher who can allow day after day in the early part of the week to glide away, without any solicitude to determine on what subjects he shall address his auditory on the approaching Sabbath. Can he secure at the end of the week all that leisure on which he calculates—all that freedom from intrusion and interruption requisite to tranquil continuity of thought? Is it certain that he will experience no perplexity or embarrassment in effecting a choice when a choice can no longer be delayed?

Is he wise in deferring his effort to select a subject till that period of the week, when all the time that remains is scarcely sufficient for the requisite inquiries and reflections, even were the choice already determined? Is he consulting the approbation of his own mind, or the approbation of Him in whose service he is engaged, or the good of those whose edification he is anxious to promote? Is he not negligently unmindful of the benefit he might derive, during the course of the week, from those thoughts and feelings which, even without any direct exertion, might almost spontaneously occur to his mind, and become intimately associated with the subject on which he is to preach, were the selection of that subject to precede, by a due interval, the period of direct preparation?

IV. *Let not undue importance be attached to artificial rules for the composition of Sermons.*

I would not discourage the perusal of such productions as the celebrated Essay by Claude, on the composition of a Sermon, but I will take the liberty of saying, that I attach to such aids only a subordinate degree of importance. An

able translator of that Essay states in his Preface, that he was induced to publish it, "for the use of those studious Ministers in our Protestant Dissenting churches, who have not enjoyed the advantage of a regular academical education." The remark obviously implies, that, in his opinion, the rules and advices which that Essay contains are of much less importance to those who have enjoyed such advantages; and I cannot but be of opinion, that they whose minds have been disciplined by a course of liberal studies, will derive far more assistance from the guidance of *general principles* than from any specific or artificial rules.

Almost all the exercises of intellect which a judicious plan of education prescribes, have a tendency to train the mind to those habits of thought which dictate a natural, and therefore a logical method of unfolding and arranging our ideas, so as to put our hearers, by a method the most direct, into full possession of our sentiments. Whatever then is adapted to induce these important habits of thought, tends, by a most beneficial influence, to supersede the necessity of artificial aid, and at the same time to secure the additional advantage of leaving the mind free

from those fetters and trammels which the rules of art too frequently impose.

In the composition of Sermons the exercise of a discriminating judgment is requisite, not only in the formation, but also in the *exhibition* of the plan of arrangement. If the general outline be not explicitly stated, the hearer remains without any pledge, for the judicious selection, or orderly distribution, of the materials of thought which belong to the subject, and without that excitement to fixed attention, and that aid in his efforts to recollect the train of thought, which the preacher should not fail to afford. On the other hand, if the arrangement be too formal, or the plan too fully disclosed, other evils are incurred. An exposure of these may be given, with the greatest effect, in the words of a master of pulpit eloquence, whose discourses exhibit the most finished models of correct thought, elevated sentiment, and elegant composition which our language contains:—

"In the mode of conducting our public ministrations, we are, perhaps, too formal and mechanical; in the distribution of the matter of our Sermons, we indulge too little variety, and, exposing our plan in all its parts, abate the

edge of curiosity, by enabling the hearer to anticipate what we intend to advance. Why should that force which surprise gives to every emotion, derived from just and affecting sentiments, be banished from the pulpit, when it is found of such moment in every other kind of public address?——Method, we are aware, is an essential ingredient in every discourse designed for the instruction of mankind, but it ought never to force itself on the attention as an object apart; never appear to be an end, instead of an instrument; or beget a suspicion of the sentiments being introduced for the sake of the method, not the method for the sentiments."*

V. *Endeavour to ascertain and to exhibit the leading sentiment intended to be conveyed by the text you have selected, and let that leading sentiment dictate the spirit and plan of the discourse.*

It is only by this method of studying discourses, that an enlightened preacher can satisfy

* Sermon on the Discouragements and Supports of the Christian Minister, by the Rev. Robert Hall.

the demands either of his judgment or of his conscience, or meet the just expectation of those hearers, who are anxious to make progress in the knowledge of the Scriptures. It is by this method that the preacher will best secure unity of design in every discourse, and a suitable variety in his plans of arrangement. That variety will naturally grow out of the habit of yielding his mind to the impression, which the prominent idea of a text is calculated to produce: a diversity of method, without any direct effort to attain it, will then almost follow, of course, from a variety in the texts and subjects themselves.

By adopting this mode of constructing Sermons, the preacher will be effectually on his guard against the very prevalent evil, to which it might have been presumed only minds of an inferior order would be exposed:—it is the plan of dividing texts, not on principles of logical analysis, but of verbal dissection. Without any apparent solicitude to fix on the point which is of primary importance, preachers of this class distribute the *words* rather than the *sentiments* under distinct heads, and frequently amplify very subordinate points at which the text merely glances, with as great a latitude of illustration as

the topic which is of primary importance. The sentiment which the discourse ought chiefly to impress upon the mind receives but very transient and superficial notice, and the attention, so far from being concentrated upon the main point which the inspired writer had in view, is distracted by a variety of topics irrelevant, or at least subordinate.

VI. *In the study and in the delivery of your Sermons, let your first and chief solicitude regard the thought rather than the language.*

It is of great importance that the language we employ should be an adequate and appropriate vehicle of thought, but the primary object of anxiety should be, that we may have ideas worthy of conveyance. No laboured embellishments of style can compensate for poverty of thought; nor will the act of communication be usually difficult, if the ideas possess an intrinsic value. But if we introduce to the attention of the hearer no sentiments or thoughts worthy of his regard, or adapted to keep alive a feeling of interest in his mind, he will inevitably become weary and listless. If we present to him no

materials for the operations of thinking to which he attaches any value, we shall appear to him to have forfeited all claim on his attention. He will complain that we "afford neither exercise to his reason nor entertainment to his fancy." Now in order to give real value to a discourse, and a fitness to accomplish the object proposed, we should be anxious to secure three points: ——There should be a clear elucidation or enforcement of some scriptural truth—there should be in every part of the discourse continuity of thought—and there should be, in the structure of the whole, an adaptation to produce impression and effect.

VII. *Aim chiefly at those qualities of style which are calculated to secure the great ends of discourses from the pulpit.*

The first object of a speaker or writer should be to study perspicuity of expression. "Whatever," observes Dr. Campbell, "be the ultimate intention of the orator, to inform, to convince, to please, to move, or to persuade, still he must speak so as to be understood, or he speaks to no purpose. If he do not propose to convey

certain sentiments into the minds of his hearers, by the aid of signs intelligible to them, he may as well declaim before them in an unknown tongue. Perspicuity, being to the understanding what light is to the eye, ought to be diffused over the whole performance.—By perspicuity, as Quintilian justly observes, care is to be taken, not that the hearer *may* understand if he will; but that he *must* understand, whether he will or not."* "It may be worth remarking," observes Dr. Whately, "that to those who wish to be understood by the lower orders, one of the best principles of selection is to prefer terms of *Saxon* origin to those derived from the *Latin*. There is a remarkable scope for such a choice, from the multitude of synonymes derived, respectively, from those two sources. The compilers of the Liturgy, being anxious to reach the understanding of all classes, availed themselves of this circumstance in employing many synonymous expressions, of the description just alluded to. Take as instances: *acknowledge* and *confess; dissemble* and *cloak;*

* "Non ut intelligere possit, sed ne omnino possit non intelligere curandum."—*Instit.* lib. viii. cap. 2.

humble and *lowly; assemble* and *meet together.*"

If the first object of the preacher's solicitude be, that his ideas should have free entrance into the *intellect* of his hearers, his next concern should be that they should obtain an avenue to the *heart.* A style distinguished by vigour and energy is with this view greatly to be desired. In aiming at energy of style it is necessary to guard against the extremes both of conciseness and of prolixity. "It is obvious," says Dr. Whately, "that extreme conciseness is ill suited to hearers whose intellectual powers and cultivation are small; the usual expedient, however, of employing a prolix style, by way of accommodation to such minds, is seldom successful.—They are likely to be bewildered by tedious expansion, and being unable to maintain a steady attention to what is said, they forget part of what they have heard before the whole is completed. Add to which, that the feebleness produced by excessive dilution will occasion the attention to languish; and what is imperfectly attended to, however clear in itself, will usually be but imperfectly understood.—Young writers and speakers are apt to fall into

a style of pompous verbosity, from an idea that they are adding both perspicuity and force to what is said, when they are only incumbering the sense with a needless load of words. It is not indeed uncommon to hear a speaker of this class mentioned as having a 'very fine command of language,' when perhaps it might be said with more correctness, that 'his language has a command of him,' that is, that he follows a train of words rather than of thought."

"He who is studious of energetic brevity, should aim at what may be called a *suggestive* style; such, that is, as, without making a distinct mention of a multitude of particulars, shall put the *hearer's* mind into the *same train of thought* as the *speaker's*, and suggest to him more than is actually expressed."

"The praises which have been bestowed upon *copiousness* of diction, have probably tended to mislead authors into a cumbrous verbosity. It should be remembered that there is no real copiousness in a multitude of synonymes and circumlocutions. A house would not be the better furnished for being stored with ten times

as many of the same kinds of articles as were needed, while destitute of those required for other purposes. The completeness of a library does not consist in the number of volumes, especially if many of them are *duplicates;* but in its containing copies of all the most valuable works. And in like manner, true copiousness of language consists in having at command a suitable expression for each *different* modification of thought. This will often save much circumlocution; so that the greater our command of language, the more concisely we shall be able to write."

Energy of style is always to be preferred by the preacher to *elegance.* He should uniformly address his hearers, "*not* as if he *wanted to say something,* but as if he *had something to say;* as if there was something in his mind which he was desirous of communicating to his hearers."—"Any expression indeed that is vulgar, in bad taste, and unsuitable to the dignity of the subject or of the occasion, is to be avoided; since, though it might have, with some hearers, an energetic effect, this would be more than counterbalanced by the disgust produced in others."

VIII. *Cultivate, during the early years of your ministry, the habit of writing some of your discourses, with due regard to the composition.*

This is desirable not only with a view to improvement in style, but also to improvement in the power of thought. Such is the connexion between thinking and expressing thought, that to attempt the latter is one of the most effectual methods to excel in the former. Frequent composition has a powerful tendency to secure clearness in our conceptions, as well as precision in our language, and at once to promote fulness of illustration and compression of style. It will be the most effectual preservative from that loose and tedious style of expression, by which some speakers employ a profusion of words to convey a very few thoughts, and exhaust the patience of their hearers by a dull prolixity which excludes all point, vivacity, and condensation.

It is a just remark of Cicero, in his Dialogues *De Oratore*, that the habit of writing renders valuable aid even in extemporaneous speaking, by giving it in some degree the character of correct composition. He observes also, that if

the speaker, after availing himself of written composition in part, should then lay aside his notes, the remaining part of his address will continue to be, in great measure, of a similar character and style.

If, however, composition for the pulpit be attempted, it should be the result of energetic thought and the strenuous application of the mind to the subject. Let it not be imagined, that because a sermon is written, it must therefore be superior to other discourses, by the same preacher, which have not been reduced to writing. A careless, hurried composition will be, in all probability, vapid, dull, and spiritless, and decidedly inferior, both in thought and language, to a sermon of which the outline merely was written, but of which the materials for illustration were selected with care, though not committed to writing. The latter method of studying for the pulpit may indeed, with great advantage, be pursued conjointly with the plan of careful composition. And while this combination of plans of study might with propriety be recommended as eligible, it is in fact the plan to which ministers must often have recourse from necessity, if a demand be made

upon them by their congregations of several discourses every week. By carrying on both methods, and by writing out at least one sermon with care every week, the young preacher may be making progress in the excellencies of a style best adapted for the pulpit, while, in conjunction with this effort, he may be acquiring additional facilities in expressing his thoughts with fluency in unpremeditated language.

IX. *Allow not the habit of writing Sermons to occasion the adoption of any undesirable method of delivering discourses from the pulpit.*

If a Sermon be fairly written out at full length, then unquestionably the easiest way of delivery which the preacher can adopt, is to read it to his hearers. During the interval between the composition and the delivery of the sermon (if interval there be) the mind of the preacher may be perfectly free from anxiety, nor will the power of impression be dependent, in any considerable degree, upon the possession or the absence of desirable feelings on the part of the minister. But if in this respect he obtain

a relief from solicitude, how costly is the purchase, how great the sacrifice by which he obtains the exemption. His countenance, his tones, his attitudes are more or less subjected to a species of mechanical restraint, if not even laid under a paralyzing interdict. His communion of spirit with the auditory he addresses is rendered by far less intimate, and his power of awakening their sympathies and exciting in their minds emotions in unison with his own, is, by his own act and deed, immeasurably enfeebled.

It is remarkable that even in a period of general declension in reference to morals and religion, a royal mandate was issued to forbid the practice of reading sermons. The following prohibition of King Charles the Second is said to be on record in the statute-book of the University of Cambridge.

"To the Vice-Chancellor and Gentlemen.

"Whereas his Majesty is informed, that the practice of reading sermons is generally taken up by the preachers before the University, and therefore sometimes continued before himself; his Majesty has commanded me to signify to

you his pleasure that the said practice, which took its beginning from the disorders of the late times, be wholly laid aside, and that the said preachers deliver their sermons, both in Latin and English, by memory without book, as being a way of preaching which his Majesty judges most agreeable to the use of all foreign churches, to the customs of the University heretofore, and to the nature and intention of that holy exercise. And that his Majesty's commands in these premises may be duly regarded and observed, his further pleasure is, that the names of all such ecclesiastical persons as shall continue the present supine and slothful way of preaching, be from time to time signified to me by the Vice-Chancellor for the time, on pain of his Majesty's displeasure.

(Signed) "MONMOUTH."

There have been, indeed, and there are individuals whose eloquent discourses, even when read from the pulpit, excite a lively feeling and produce a deep impression. Let not, however, their example induce the young preacher to presume on a successful imitation. Let him

first become their equal in eloquence, and then, and not till then, let him venture to imitate their mode of delivering their discourses.

But if objections so strong may be urged against the practice of reading sermons, what opinion are we to form of the method of committing them to memory after they have been written, and reciting them in the pulpit *memoriter?*—There are, it is acknowledged, preachers who can deliver their sermons, thus committed to memory, with so much fluency and effect, that they may be regarded as affording exceptions to the general remarks which may justly be offered on the plan itself. It was the decided opinion of the author of the Philosophy of Rhetoric, both from his own experience and the extensive observations he had made, that the plan of repeating sermons from memory is a method still more unfavourable to impression than the method of reading them. "There is something," he justly observes, "in charging one's memory with a long chain of words and syllables, and then running on, as it were mechanically, in the same train, the preceding word associating and drawing in the subsequent, that seems, by taking off a man's attention from the

thought to the expression, to render him unsusceptible of the delicate sensibility as to the thought, which is the true spring of rhetorical pronunciation.—As to my personal experience," adds Dr. Campbell, "I shall frankly tell you what I know to be the fact. I have tried both ways; I continued long in the practice of repeating, and was even thought (if people did not very much deceive me) to succeed in it; but I am absolutely certain, that I can give more energy, and preserve the attention of the hearers better, to what I read, than ever it was in my power to do to what I repeated."*

This quotation, it is scarcely necessary to observe, after the remarks already made, is adduced, not to represent the plan of reading sermons as eligible, but to show that, undesirable as it is, there may be at least as many considerations urged in its defence, as in favour of the very ineligible method of submitting, first to the servile drudgery of committing discourses to memory, and then to the agitating process of reciting them to the congregation.

* See Dr. Campbell's Lectures on Pulpit Eloquence Lect. IV.

What then, it may be asked, is the most advisable method of preaching? It is, I think, beyond a doubt, the method recommended long ago by the excellent Fenelon, in his Dialogues on Pulpit Eloquence, and practised, I believe, with a greater or less degree of studious preparation, by a very considerable number of the most acceptable and useful preachers of the present day. It is the method of writing a considerable part, and occasionally the whole of a sermon, in the act of preparing to preach, and, after due reflection on the train of thought pursued in every part of the discourse, endeavouring to exhibit to the hearers the precise plan, the intended sentiments, and the substance of the illustrations, without any anxiety to adhere to the exact language in which they had been expressed. If, in any instances, as may be naturally expected, the very terms and phrases occur to the mind, they are adopted; if not, the thought is embodied, without hesitation, in such modes of expression as at the moment suggest themselves to the mind. Under these circumstances the mind derives full advantage from application to previous study, while it is perfectly unfettered by painful efforts of memory,

and fully enabled to yield itself to the impulses of feeling, which the subject, the occasion, and a scriptural dependence on divine aid may encourage. Some preachers have sufficient confidence in their powers of memory to retain, without any difficulty or solicitude, the exact plan of arrangement which they have resolved to adopt; others, very justifiably avail themselves in the pulpit of an outline of their discourse, in order to guard against the least danger of embarrassment, from forgetting, at any moment, the next division of their subject to which they intended to proceed.

The importance of a good *delivery* is obvious to all hearers of every class.

The practical rule for Elocution, prescribed with great wisdom by Dr. Whately, is, "not only to pay no studied attention to the voice, but studiously to *withdraw* the thoughts from it, and to dwell as intently as possible on the sense; trusting to nature to suggest spontaneously the proper emphases and tones. He who not only feels his subject, but is exclusively absorbed with that feeling, will be likely to read (and speak) as if he felt it, and to communicate the impression to his

hearers.—When the delivery is *really* good, the hearers (except any one who may deliberately set himself to observe and criticise) never think about it, but are exclusively occupied with the sense it conveys and the feelings it excites."—"Let the speaker study to avoid, as far as possible, all thoughts of self, earnestly fixing the mind on the matter of what is delivered. Let him be only intent *on carrying his point*, not on gaining approbation, or even avoiding censure, except with a view to that point. He should as it were adopt as a motto, the reply of Themistocles to the Spartan commander, Eurybiades, who lifted his staff to chastise the earnestness with which his own opinion was controverted: "Strike, but hear me."

It is said that an actor was once asked by a divine, "How is it that people listen with so much emotion to what you say, which they know to be all fictitious, while they hear with comparative apathy from us truths the most sublime and important?" The answer was, "Because we deliver fiction like truth, and you deliver truth like fiction."

A singular specimen of the power of true

eloquence was given in Sheridan's speech on the Begum question, in the prosecution of Hastings:—

"The late Mr. Logan, well known from his literary efforts, and author of a most masterly defence of Mr. Hastings, went that day prepossessed for the accused and against the accuser. At the expiration of the first hour, he said to a friend, "all this is declamatory assertion without proof."—When the second was finished, "this is a most wonderful oration."—At the close of the third, "Mr. Hastings has acted very unjustifiably."—At the end of the fourth, "Mr. Hastings is a most atrocious criminal."*

In conformity with the principles already inculcated, there should be no *study* of graceful or appropriate *action*. Dr. Whately justly observes, that "action, if not perfectly unstudied, will always be intolerable. But if any one spontaneously falls into any gestures that are unbecoming, care should *then* be taken to break the habit. The case is indeed the same with utterance. If any one has an indistinct,

* See Moore's Life of Sheridan.

hesitating, or otherwise faulty delivery, *his* natural manner certainly is not what he should adopt in public speaking; and so also with respect to attitudes and gestures. It is in these points principally, that the remarks of an intelligent friend will be beneficial."

MENTAL DISCIPLINE.

II.

ON MORAL HABITS.

HINTS ON THE CULTIVATION OF THOSE MORAL HABITS WHICH WILL FACILITATE THE HONOURABLE AND SUCCESSFUL DISCHARGE OF PASTORAL DUTIES.

I.

Reflect much on the indispensable and transcendent Importance of Personal Religion.

LET it be impressed upon your mind, with all the force and all the authority of an incontrovertible axiom, that unless you are, in the sight of God, a Christian, you are destitute of the primary and essential qualification for the office of a Christian Minister. Remember, that personal religion has its commencement in the renovation

of the mind and heart, by the power of the Spirit of God; and forget not from whose lips proceeded the declaration—"Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Under the influence of this spirit-stirring assertion, let conscience be summoned deliberately to reply to such inquiries as these:—Is not my assumption of the ministerial character a solemn and public profession of being a Christian, and of believing myself to be a Christian? Can I then make this decided profession, before the church and before the world, without any danger of hypocrisy? Have I reason, on the strictest scrutiny into my own heart, to believe that I really am that which, virtually at least, I profess myself to be? Were I to enter on the sacred office, destitute of real religion, should I not find its spiritual duties irksome, and its responsibility terrific? Should I not be bringing myself under an accumulation of guilt, from the distant idea of which I may well shrink with dismay?

If inquiries such as these can receive a satisfactory reply, let it still be an object of deep and perpetual solicitude, to make progress in personal religion. Never let *personal* religion be

merged in that which is *professional.* Let not the feelings and the habits of the *Minister* induce remissness with regard to the feelings and the habits of the *Christian.* Remember that in your individual as well as pastoral character, you must hereafter appear before the throne of judgment; and forget not in your individual, as well as in your pastoral capacity, habitually to appear before the throne of grace. Be assured, also, that a due concern for the salvation and prosperity of your own soul, will be the best preparative for successful efforts, to promote the salvation and prosperity of the souls of others.

The foundation of the eminent usefulness of Dr. Cotton Mather was laid in early life, in his entire and unreserved consecration to God. The following is an extract from the memoir published by his son.

"Having chosen the Lord for his God and portion, and given up himself to Him, according to the tenor of the new covenant, he judged it might be a useful means of strengthening upon his own heart, a sense of his engagement to God, to write and subscribe an explicit covenant with him; which he therefore did, in the following words:—

"THE COVENANT.

"I renounce all the vanities, and cursed idols, and evil courses of this world.

"I engage, that I will ever have the great God my best good, my last end, and my only Lord:

"That I will be ever rendering acknowledgments to the Lord Jesus Christ, in all the relations which he bears unto me:

"That I will be ever studying what is my duty in these things; and wherein I find myself to fall short, I will ever make it my grief and my shame; and for pardon, betake myself to the blood of the everlasting covenant.

"Now humbly imploring the grace of the Mediator to be sufficient for me, I do, as a further solemnity, subscribe my name, with both hand and heart, unto this instrument.

"COTTON MATHER."

"Having thus engaged himself to God, he laboured to improve his acquaintance with him, to bring his heart to delight in him, and his will to an entire submission and resignation to him. For this purpose he formed the following resolutions:—

"1. I will ever mourn over the distempers of my own heart, which incline me to take an undue delight in creatures, in idols, in vanities.

"2. I will bless God for those afflictions, for those dispensations, be they ever so distressing, by which he is curing these disorders in me.

"3. I will always account myself happy in the favour of God, although I should have no earthly thing to give me any satisfaction.

"4. I will reckon any opportunities for being brought into converse with God, as treasures to be preferred above all riches.

"5. I will never be in any other than in a restless disquiet of soul, until I find all my ends to be entirely swallowed up in the glory of God.

"6. I will relish all my enjoyments, even to my very meat and drink, *chiefly*, and if I can *merely*, under the notion of my being by them assisted in the knowledge, or the service of God.

"7. I will endeavour to be continually abounding in thoughts of God; nor would I be, ordinarily, one quarter of an hour wholly without them.

"8. It shall be my pleasure to wait upon God, in all the ways of his worship, in which I may have communion with him, especially in frequent prayers unto him.

"Most glorious Lord! Thou hast offered thyself unto thy creatures, and often called upon them to take thee for their God. This, this is that which I am willing, I am desirous, I am resolved this day to do. I take thee, O Lord, to be my God, and I take thy glory for the end unto which I would be, and live; I take the enjoyment of thee for my great and sole happiness; and, which is the peculiar thing I am now aiming at, I take thy will to be my will. As for my own will, Lord, I find it blind, foolish, wicked, hurtful, and therefore I renounce, reject, and resign it; and say again, Lord, let thy will be my will. I have great concerns,—concerns as to this world and as to the future; they are many and weighty. But, O God, thou art the only wise God; there is perfect knowledge with thee; thou art of great power, thy understanding is infinite; and, in the Lord Jesus Christ, thou art wonderfully merciful and gracious unto them that draw nigh unto thee, as I do this day. Unto thy

wisdom and goodness I commit my concerns, one and all. I cast all my cares upon my God. O thou most wise and good God, I resign all unto thee: Is it not thy pleasure that I should do so? It is. And hast thou not pleasure in seeing me do so? Thou hast. I then profess, in thy presence, all my concerns are put into thy hands, and left unto thy management for ever. And now I am inconceivably happy."

II.

Aim, with the most conscientious solicitude, at Purity of Motive in all your Ministerial Engagements.

Institute a scrutinizing inquiry into the motives which have induced you to enter on the office of the Christian Ministry. Was your choice determined under the influence of the love of literature and science, for the pursuit of which you promised yourself, in the ministerial office, opportunity and facility? Can you trace among your leading motives a desire of professional distinction and eminence? Can you detect, among your principal inducements, a desire of elevation to greater emolument or

higher connexions, than you had otherwise encouragement to anticipate? Were you at liberty to choose a profession on merely secular principles, such considerations as these might naturally be expected to exert an influence over your mind; but in entering on the Christian Ministry, you are supposed to act, and you are required to act, on principles of higher character; and it may be presumed, that you have solemnly professed to be actuated by a supreme desire to promote the glory of God, the honour of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the eternal interests of your fellow-men. Ever, then, guard against the influence of unworthy and sinister motives, in all the objects at which you aim, in all the arrangements you form for the prosecution of your studies, and especially in all the discourses you deliver from the pulpit.

"The ministerial work," observes Mr. Baxter, (in his Reformed Pastor,) "must be managed purely for God and the salvation of the people, and not for any private ends of our own. This is our sincerity in it. A wrong end makes all the work bad. It is not a serving God, but ourselves, if we do it not for God, but for ourselves. They that set upon this as a common

work, to make a trade of it for their worldly livelihood, will find that they have chosen a bad trade, though a good employment. Hard studies, much knowledge, and excellent preaching, is but hypocritical sinning, if the ends be not right."——"The work may be God's, and yet we may do it, not for God, but for ourselves. I confess I feel such continual danger on this point, that if I did not watch, lest I should study for myself, and preach for myself, and write for myself, rather than for Christ, I should soon miscarry. Consider, I beseech you, brethren, what baits there are in the work of the ministry, to entice a man to selfishness, even in the highest works of piety! The fame of a godly man is as great a snare as the fame of a learned man. But woe to him that takes up with the fame of godliness, instead of godliness! 'Verily I say unto you, they have their reward.' When the times were all for learning and empty formalities, the temptation of the proud did lie that way. But now, when, through the unspeakable mercy of God, the most lively practical preaching is in credit, and godliness itself is in credit, the temptation of the proud is to pretend to be zealous preachers and godly men.

O what a fine thing is it to have the people crowding to hear us, and affected with what we say, and yielding up to us their judgments and affections! What a noble thing it is to be cried up as the ablest and godliest man in the country,—to be famed through the land for the highest spiritual excellencies! O, therefore, be jealous of yourselves."

"Blessed be God," said Mr. Henry Martyn, "*I feel myself to be his minister.* This thought, which I can hardly describe, came after reading Brainerd. I wish for no service but the service of God, in labouring for souls on earth, and to do his will in heaven." On one occasion he thus wrote in his journal:—"I felt very unconcerned about men's opinions before and after my Sermon. Before it, I could solemnly appeal to God, and found comfort and pleasure in doing so, that I desired his glory alone—that I detested the thought of seeking my own praise, or taking pleasure in hearing it."

Let usefulness, then,—usefulness to the souls of men, be your grand and perpetual aim. Let your mind be habitually engaged in reflecting on the value of the human soul—the danger of perdition to which many of your hearers may

be still exposed—the paramount importance of rescuing them from impending ruin, and bringing them to the enjoyment of the great salvation! Under the exciting and directing influence of such considerations as these, let your subjects be selected; let your discussions be pursued; let your thoughts be arranged; let your style be formed; let your discourses be delivered. Let those words of an inspired teacher dwell much upon your mind:—"Let him know that he who converteth a sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins."

"Faith," observes Mr. Cecil, "is the mainspring of a minister. Hell is before me, and thousands of souls shut up there in everlasting agonies.—Jesus Christ stands forth to save men from rushing into this bottomless abyss.—He sends me to proclaim his ability and love; I want no fourth idea! every fourth idea is contemptible! every fourth idea is a grand impertinence."

III.

Repress, to the utmost, the feelings of Vanity and Pride, and the undue desire of popular Applause.

"Humility," observes Mr. Cecil, "is the spirit of our dispensation—not a creeping servile humility, but an entire self-renunciation. Pride is the most universal and inveterate of all vices—every man is a proud man, though all are not equally proud. No sin harasses the christian so much, nor accompanies him so unweariedly; its forms of exhibiting itself are infinitely varied, and none are more common than the affectation of humility. Pride is the master-sin of the spirit; and the grace of God, in the whole tenor of our dispensation, is directed against it."

Against the ever-besetting sins of pride and vanity, the christian minister, and more especially the young minister, should be perpetually on his guard: he is in danger of being tempted to pride of office, to pride of real or imaginary talent, to pride of learning, and perhaps to pride of popularity and success. While in danger of the pride which would impel him to think more

highly of himself than he ought to think, he is in danger also of the vanity which would impel him to aim at display, that he may excite the admiration of others, and receive the incense of their praise. Against these fearful dangers, then, let him be ever on his guard; let him view himself in the light in which he would be regarded by others, were the inward workings of pride and vanity distinctly apparent in their view; and let him ask his own heart, whether, if he would be degraded in *their* estimation by the disclosure, he ought not to feel more degraded in *his own*, by the consciousness of their indulgence. Pitiably fallen from true dignity is he, in whose mind the elevation of human applause can counteract the depressing influence of self-reproach! But there is another and a stronger light, in which the christian minister is required to contemplate and scrutinize the principles of his conduct—it is "the light of *His* countenance who searcheth the heart, and knoweth what is in man, and requireth that whatever we do in word or deed, we should do in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving glory to God by him."

To recommend the young minister to cherish

a feeling of *indifference* with regard to the estimation in which his pulpit services are held, would indicate ignorance both of human nature and of christian morals.—"Let every one of us," said an Apostle, "please his neighbour for his good, to edification." If usefulness be the end at which he aims in his ministry, and the acceptableness of his exertions be desired, as a means to the accomplishment of that end, he is not chargeable with a dereliction of christian principle: to please is, to a certain degree, almost necessary in order to persuade. Of this the wisest of men was convinced, and therefore, in the review of his labours, he thus expresses himself:—"Because the preacher was wise, he gave good heed, and sought out and set in order many proverbs, and sought to find out acceptable words."

If, however, applause be valued and pursued for its own sake, and for the gratification of the principle of self-love, it becomes positively sinful in its character, and highly injurious in its tendency. Under the influence of the feelings now induced, the mind is yielded to the domination of vanity. This degrading vice never can be more offensive in the eyes of an Omniscient

Observer, than when it vitiates the performances of the pulpit, and urges its occupant to aim at the display of his critical acumen, his extensive research, his strength of reasoning, his fertility of imagination, or his power of graceful and impressive elocution. "If he, on the one hand," observes Dr. Chalmers, "enter with aspiring confidence into the field of argument, and think that he is to carry all before him, by a series of invincible demonstrations; or if his people, on the other hand, ever ready to be set in motion by the idle impulse of novelty, or to be seduced by the glare of human accomplishments, come in trooping multitudes around him, and hang on the eloquence of his lips, or the wisdom of his able and profound understanding, a more unchristian attitude cannot be conceived; nor shall we venture to compute the weekly accumulation of guilt which may come upon the parties, when such a business as this is going on. How little must the presence of God be felt in that place, where the high functions of the pulpit are degraded into a stipulated exchange of entertainment on the one side, and of admiration on the other: and surely it were a sight to make angels weep, when a weak and

vapouring mortal, surrounded by his fellow-sinners, and hastening to the grave and the judgment along with them, finds it a dearer object to his bosom, to regale his hearers by the exhibition of himself, than to do, in plain earnest, the work of his Master, and urge on the business of repentance and of faith, by the impressive simplicities of the Gospel."

It is said of one of the ancient Fathers, that he sometimes wept at the applause given to his sermons. "Would to God," said he, "they had rather gone away silent and thoughtful." The following confession is extracted from the diary of a valued minister lately deceased. "I have to observe in my mind a sinful anxiety to preach well, rather than a holy anxiety to preach usefully. I fear I rather seek my own honour than God's. I confess this sin; I trust I repent of it from my heart; I hope for its forgiveness and its removal from my breast."——On another occasion he thus wrote:—"The evening spoiled with wretched pride and self-complacency—a mischievous weed, deep rooted, which all my winter seasons have not yet killed. O may it at length be rooted out." "Godly simplicity," says Mr. Bridges, "is the alchymy which converts every

thing it touches into gold. A deficiency in talent may be compensated, where the paramount desire is, that Christ "in all things may have the pre-eminence." "I have no wish to be a popular preacher in any sense but one," said Mr. Legh Richmond, "viz. *a preacher to the hearts of the people.*"

It appears from the diary of Dr. Cotton Mather, that in the very commencement of his ministry, he was aware of the insidious nature and extreme sinfulness of pride. "I therefore resolved," said he, "that I would set apart a day to humble myself before God for the pride of my own heart, and to supplicate his grace to deliver me from that sin, and from the dreadful wrath it would expose me to. I did so: and on this day I examined myself by those marks of pride, which I found in some judicious discourses on that subject; and I saw reason to fear, that I had been guilty of this sin, more especially in these two respects: 1st, By applauding myself in my own thoughts, as when I had either prayed or preached with enlargement, or answered a question readily and suitably: and 2dly, By an ambitious affectation of pre-eminence above what could reasonably belong to my age or worth, and

above other persons who were far more deserving than myself. I endeavoured, therefore, to humble my heart with the following considerations:—

"1. What is pride, but the very image of Satan on the soul? The more any man has of Christ in him, the more humble will he be, the more low and vile in his own eyes, and the more empty of himself. When God renews his image in us, he pulls down our proud thoughts. 'Tis true, pride is a natural sin; but grace will subdue it. Alas, then, how little grace have I! How unlike am I to Him who could say, 'I am lowly.' Let me for this cause 'abhor myself in dust and ashes.'

"2. Do I not by pride offend God? Pride is a breach of his holy command, and he has often declared his abhorrence of it. His Holy Spirit is grieved by it: and how earnestly does the Scripture caution me against all approaches to it! Shall I bear to think of offending that God, who has been a Father to me, and whom I have chosen and vowed to love and serve, as my God and Father; or that Spirit, upon whose influences my soul lives, and by whom I am 'sealed unto the day of redemption?'

"3. Is not my pride most unreasonable folly and madness? For have I any just occasion of 'glorying in myself?' What have I done that is singularly excellent? Am not I, in most attainments, exceeded by most of my calling and standing? And oh, have not I a corrupt nature in me? And hath not the Lord heretofore left me to commit some follies, the remembrance of which should make me go softly all my days?

"4. How dangerous, how destructive an evil is this pride! How does it provoke the God of heaven to take away from me every one of those idols, which in my fond pride I dote upon! And if the Lord should deprive me of my capacities and opportunities, into what a horrible pit of sorrows and miseries should I then fall! And let me remember that pride will, sooner than any thing, drive away the good Spirit of God from the heart of a poor creature: and if that should be my fate, 'O Lord! what a monument shall I be of thy direful vengeance! O that the Lord would set home these thoughts for my humiliation!

"But what shall I do for the cure of this disease?

"In the *first* and chief place, I would carry

my distempered heart unto the Lord Jesus Christ, and put it into the hands of that all-sufficient Physician, that he may cure it.

"*Secondly*, I would be daily watchful against my pride. I would continually keep an eye upon my heart, and check the least beginnings and first motions of this corruption.

"*Thirdly*, I would study much the nature, the work, and the aggravations of this evil, and the excellency of the grace that is contrary to it."

IV.

Let the grand points in Religion have their due prominence in your Discourses.

In selecting and combining the materials of your discourses, there are three questions which it appears reasonable to ask; and the correct answers to these inquiries will clearly prescribe the course to be pursued.

The first question is—What are the things of *primary importance* to my hearers?—in other words, What are the things which it is essential to know and believe and feel, in order to eternal salvation? This question is decided by the

Lord Jesus Christ himself, who thus addressed his heavenly Father; "This is life eternal, to know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." Then whatever may be omitted in discourses from the pulpit, there must be no omission of the doctrine of "Christ crucified." It is the grand essential; it is the indispensable requisite. "If we can but teach Christ to our people," says Mr. Baxter, "we teach them all. We must have our people's *necessities* in our eyes. Other things are desirable, but these *must* be known, or else our people are undone for ever. I confess necessity has been the conductor of my studies and life. It chooses the book I shall read, and tells when, and how long. It chooses my text, and makes my sermon."——"We must SEIZE THE MAIN, COMMANDING TRUTHS OF SCRIPTURE, as the Apostles have summed them up. The inspired penmen have told us that CHRIST, THE POWER OF GOD AND THE WISDOM OF GOD, is the centre and corner stone of Revelation. The glory of Christ, then, and the work of that Holy Spirit, whom he has left with us as his representative, and the great teacher of the church—these are the governing points, around which all other truths

are arranged, and to which they are subordinate. If the minister does not seize this commanding discovery, in vain will he languish about other matters. If he once be brought, by personal contrition and faith, to receive Christ Jesus the Lord, and to rejoice in him, he will soon find that he is possessed of the key to all the Bible, that he has discovered the pearl of unknown price, that he is enriched with unsearchable treasures of wisdom and knowledge. This doctrine of Christ, however, is not the mere repetition of the term, Christ; it embraces of course all those truths, which prepare the hearts of men for receiving him, and which teach them how to walk in him, and adorn his Gospel.—But still the prominent figure in our representations of Christianity must be Christ himself, in all his attributes and grace. A revived Christianity is a revived exhibition of the glorious person of Christ."*

A second question is — What am I *required* by my divine Master, to make the prevailing and characteristic topics of my ministry? I obtain a satisfactory answer to this inquiry, from

* See Introductory Essay to Baxter's Reformed Pastor, by the Rev. Daniel Wilson.

the declaration and the example of the greatest of human teachers, under the influence of direct inspiration. "I determined not to know (to make known) any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.—We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness: but unto them who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God." Are there not many preachers, well affected apparently to evangelical doctrine, who fall very far short of that style of preaching Christ which the apostle Paul adopted and enforced? They preach Christ occasionally, and, in their own opinion, as often as the topic of discussion leads to Christ; but not unfrequently they find it difficult to trace the bearing of the subject on the character or work of Christ. The apostle Paul would, in every instance, have traced it, with ease and gracefulness and effect.

A third question is—What is the description of preaching, which, in point of fact, proves *most efficient?* And in pursuing this inquiry, I am led precisely to the same result as in obtaining replies to the two former questions. To whatever period of the history of the church I direct

my inquiries; or to whatever denomination of christians, or to whatever order of preachers, in point of talents or learning—I find *that* ministry to be most efficient, and indeed, that ministry *alone* to be efficient, in which the doctrine of the Cross of Christ obtains the same prominence, with which it was exhibited in the preaching of the apostles themselves. Such is the important fact; nor is it difficult, on the principles of the New Testament, to account for the fact. The ministry of the gospel owes its efficiency to the superadded influence of the Spirit of God. Now of the Holy Spirit, Jesus said, when giving to the disciples the promise of his influence, "He shall glorify me." The Holy Spirit then glorifies the Saviour, by honouring with efficiency and success the ministry which honours Christ. Inefficient, as it regards the grand results of the christian ministry, because unaccompanied by the power of the Spirit of God, will that preaching be, which fails to honour Christ in his personal dignity, his glorious atonement, and his supreme authority. With the accompaniment of distinguished talent, it may in some few instances attract a numerous and applauding auditory; but it will bring no

glory to God, no honour to Christ, no souls to heaven!

"Let there be no extremes," said Mr. Cecil; "yet I am arrived at this conviction;—Men who lean toward the extreme of evangelical *privileges* in their ministry, do much more to the conversion of their hearers, than they do who lean toward the extreme of *requirement*. And *my own experience* confirms my observation. I feel myself repelled if any thing chills, loads, or urges me. This is my nature, and I see it to be very much the nature of other men. But let me hear, 'Son of man, thou hast played the harlot with many lovers; yet return again to me, saith the Lord'—I am melted and subdued."

V.

Aim, in preaching, at the utmost Seriousness and Earnestness of Manner.

Language is at best but a partial and imperfect vehicle of thought and feeling. It does not, in every instance, excite in the mind of the hearer the exact ideas, much less the entire impression, which it is the object of the speaker to convey. It is exceedingly desirable that the

effect should be aided and heightened by additional indications of fervid, benignant, and impassioned feelings on the part of the speaker. If the subject be of the most momentous nature; if the future and eternal interests of the hearer be represented as involved in the reception or rejection of the truth announced; it is natural and reasonable to expect from the preacher, no slight manifestation of earnestness in the expression of his countenance, and the tones of his voice. If this expectation be disappointed, there is a want of accordance and of congruity between the import of his words and the import of his delivery; he has no *natural* language to deepen the impression of his *artificial* language. The hearer feels at liberty to entertain a doubt, whether the preacher himself be the subject of such emotions as correspond with the words he employs, and even whether the preacher himself be fully convinced of their truth and importance: or, at least, he may derive from such apparent coldness and indifference an excuse for the listlessness and the torpor of his own mind.

"How few," exclaims the fervid Baxter, "speak about everlasting joy or torment, in such a manner as to make men believe that they

are in good earnest. Alas! we speak so drowsily, that sleepy sinners cannot hear! The blow falls so light, that the hardhearted cannot feel! O how earnestly should we deliver a message of such a nature as ours, in which is concerned the everlasting life or death of those we address! Methinks we are in no respect so deficient as in this seriousness. In the name of God, brethren, labour to awaken your hearts, that you may be prepared to awaken the hearts of sinners. Remember, if you give the holy things of God the highest praises in words, and yet do it coldly, you will seem in the manner to unsay what you said in the matter. It is a kind of contempt of things so great, to speak of them without great affection and fervency. The manner, as well as the words, must set them forth. If we are commanded, whatever our hand findeth to do, to do it with all our might; then, certainly, such should be our efforts, in preaching for men's salvation. Though I do not commend a *constant loudness* in your delivery, yet I would enforce a *constant seriousness.* Whatever you do, let the people see that you are in good earnest. I seldom come out of the pulpit," (and this is,

be it remembered, the confession of a holy man, of exemplary fervour), "but my conscience smites me, that I have been no more serious and earnest. It accuses me, not so much for want of elegance, or human ornaments; or for letting fall an unhandsome word: but it asks me,—How couldst thou speak of everlasting life and death with such a heart? How couldst thou preach of heaven and hell in so careless and sleepy a manner? Dost thou believe what thou sayest? Art thou in earnest or in jest? How canst thou tell people, that sin is so evil, and that its consequences are so dreadful, without being more affected by it? Shouldst thou not weep over sinners, even till thy tears interrupt thy words,—cry aloud, and shew them their transgressions,—entreat them to repent and believe, with *the utmost importunity?*— I know not what it doth by others, but the most reverential preacher, who speaks as if he saw the face of God, doth more affect my heart, though with common words, than an irreverent man with the most exquisite preparations. Yea, if he bawl it out with never so much seeming earnestness, if reverence be not answerable to fervency, it worketh but little.—We should, as

it were, suppose we saw the throne of God, and the millions of glorious angels attending him, that we might be awed with his majesty when we draw near him in his holy things."

VI.

Let a deep sense of responsibility, at the Divine Tribunal, secure Ministerial Fidelity.

Certain it is, that we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, and *there* render an account of the manner and the motives which shall have characterized the discharge of our ministry. We are charged to preserve inviolate, and to exhibit, without the least reservation, the whole counsel of God. Let then the exhibition of divine truth be made, to every class of our hearers, with the utmost explicitness, fulness, and fearlessness. Uninfluenced by any regard to the favour or the frown of men, let us only be solicitous to commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God, that we may be pure from the blood of all men. "There is a most awful trust (observes Dr. Mason) committed by the Lord Jesus to his ministering servants. Oh that they felt this trust more

than they sometimes do! You would not see the pulpit converted into a stage for the display of human ingenuity, or perverted to the display of human vanity. These things are lighter than a feather, and lose all their importance, in the eyes of a man who remembers that he has an account to settle with God; and that he knows not the moment when his account may be demanded. It is observable, and ought to sink deep into the heart of every preacher of the gospel, that Paul accounted himself pure from the blood of all men, because he had not concealed from them any part of God's truth. He knew not that policy by which some pulpits have been disgraced, of deferring the declaration of the *whole* truth to a more convenient season. As if the native enmity of the heart were to be softened by delay—as if it could be reduced by any thing but the truth itself—as if men ever found their audiences more tractable by this kind of forbearance; or were themselves more instrumental in bringing sinners to God; or had the answer of a good conscience more complete in their own bosoms. God knows infinitely better than we, what truths are suited to our circumstances, and has revealed them

in his book. If there is one trait of a faithful minister more obvious than another, it is this, that he is not afraid, nor ashamed to say what God has said before him, in his Word."

Hear the spirit-stirring words of Baxter:— "O dreadful reckoning to unfaithful shepherds, when they must answer for the ruin of their miserable flocks! How great will their damnation be which must be aggravated by the damnation of so many others! When the question is, 'How came so many souls to perish?' the answer must be, Because they set light by Christ and holiness, which should have saved them. 'But what made them set light by Christ and holiness?' It was their deceitful confidence, that they had so much part in Christ and holiness as would suffice to save them, though, indeed, they were unsanctified strangers unto both. They were not practically acquainted with their necessities. 'But how came they to continue thus ignorant of themselves, till it was too late?' Because they had teachers that kept them strangers to the nature of true holiness, and did not labour, publicly and privately, to con-

vince them of their undone condition, and to drive them to Christ, that by him they might have life. Woe to such teachers that ever they were born, that must then be found under the guilt of such perfidiousness and cruelty! Had they ever felt themselves, what it is to be pursued by the law and conscience, and with broken hearts, to cast themselves on Christ, as their only hope and refuge; and what it is to be sanctified, and to be sensible of all his love, —they would take another course with sinners, and talk of sin, and Christ, and holiness, at other rates, and not deceive their people with themselves."—"How often do we hear sermons applauded, which force us, in compassion to men's souls, to think, O what is all this to the opening of a sinner's heart unto himself, and showing him his unregenerate state? What is this to the conviction of a self-deluding soul, that is passing into hell, with the confident expectations of heaven? What is this to show men their undone condition, and the absolute necessity of Christ, and of renewing grace? What is in this to lead men up from earth to heaven, and to acquaint them with the unseen world, and to help them to the life of faith and

love, and to the mortifying and pardon of their sins? How little skill have many miserable preachers in the searching of the heart, and helping men to know themselves whether Christ be in them, or whether they be reprobates?"

VII.

Let there be, in your Discourses, the utmost Clearness of Discrimination between the two great classes of characters of which your hearers must necessarily consist.

"The Bible," observes Dr. Chalmers, "everywhere groups the individuals of our species into two general and distinct classes, and assigns to each of them its appropriate designation. It tells us of the vessels of wrath, and of the vessels of mercy; of the travellers on a narrow path, and on a broad way; of the children of this world, and the children of light; and lastly, of men who are carnally minded, and men who are spiritually minded. It employs these terms in a meaning so extensive, that, by each couplet of them, it embraces all individuals. There is no separate number of persons, forming of themselves a neutral class, and standing without the

limits of the two others. And were it possible to conceive, that human nature, as it exists at present in the world, were laid in a map before us, you would see no intermediate ground between the two classes, which are thus contrasted in the Bible;—but these are thrown into two distinct regions, with one clear and vigorous line of demarcation between them.—We cannot conceive then a question of mightier interest, than the situation of this line,—a line which takes its own steady and unfaltering way, through the thousand varieties of character that exist in the world; and which reduces them all to two great and awfully important divisions."

Without tracing this line of demarcation, and urging the hearers to ascertain on which side of the line they actually stand, the great end of preaching cannot be secured. Without it, you cannot reasonably expect that there should be awakened a feeling of personal interest, or a sense of deep solicitude. If the hearers be not directed, and even impelled, to institute a scrutinizing inquiry into their character in the sight of God, it is to be expected that many will be saying to themselves "Peace and Safety," when

even on the very verge of "sudden destruction." Absurd were it to expect, that any should "flee for refuge to the hope set before them," if they are not deeply aware of their exposure to "the wrath to come." There may be in the very discussion of a subject, and in the general structure of a discourse, ample materials for discrimination, of which every hearer *ought* to avail himself, for the purposes of self-examination; but it would betray great ignorance of the human heart, and of the delusion it often practises upon itself, to presume, that the hearer will spontaneously institute, and faithfully pursue, the process of scrutinizing his own character. To this momentous, but unwelcome effort, the preacher of the gospel should urge his auditory, in every discourse he delivers. He should not allow them to escape from the task of self-inspection. He should draw the line of demarcation with the utmost clearness, and compel them, however reluctant they may feel, to bring their consciences to the test. By means of the utmost fidelity and earnestness, he should endeavour to render it almost impossible for them to neutralize the pungency of divine warnings and threatenings, or to continue in a state of entire

uncertainty, with regard to their present character, and their prospects of futurity.

VIII.

Let pointed Appeals to the Heart, and direct Applications to the Conscience, form a prominent feature of your Discourses.

Addresses from the pulpit should not assume, throughout, the *didactic* form. The preacher should remember, that his work should not be restricted simply to *instruction*. There are other objects also at which he should strenuously aim. He should endeavour to excite, to awaken, to impress, and to persuade. In order to the attainment of these ends, he must address himself not merely to the judgment, but also to the conscience, and to the heart. Nor let him imagine, that these objects are so unconnected, as to render it advisable for him studiously to keep them apart; on the contrary, let him be aware that, from the powerful and reciprocal influence of the different parts of our mental economy, while, in many instances, the intellect forms the best avenue to the heart, so, not less frequently, is the heart the best avenue to the

intellect. Whether therefore he consult the philosophy of the human mind, or the dictates of sound experience, he will avail himself of every opportunity which the subject may admit, of a pointed and powerful appeal. To defer the personal application of a subject entirely to the concluding part of a discourse, however common, appears by no means advisable. Not unfrequently does it occur, that the time is so far spent, and the patience of the hearer so far exhausted, that the applicatory part of the sermon is short and hurried and powerless. Perhaps some vague anticipation in the mind of the preacher, of the probability of this, has prevented the due consideration of those trains of thought, which might be best adapted for the purpose; so that the very part of the discourse which might have been the most efficient, is as little studied by the preacher as it is felt by the hearer. There is also an aspect of formality, when the design of a direct application is avowed, which is not, in every instance, so favourable to the desired effect, as a sudden and unexpected, yet natural and appropriate appeal, arising out of the discussion or elucidation of the subject itself. The latter comes

upon the mind with the full force of the weighty and impressive sentiment by which it has been suggested, because it is pressed upon the conscience at the very time in which the sentiment itself is calling forth the vigour of the mind, and exciting the ardour of its feelings. Why then should we allow the mind to escape from the force and grasp of the momentous truth; and why should we allow the temperature of its feelings to be cooled down, before we make our demand on the conscience, and urge it to perform its duty? I do not recommend that the method of a concluding application should be altogether discontinued; but only that wherever a valuable opportunity presents itself of a warm and powerful appeal, it should be instantly and eagerly embraced; reserving only for the conclusion, such general inferences and considerations, as did not previously occur, or could not with equal advantage be introduced.

"You have been half an hour," said the late Mr. Robinson, of Leicester, to a brother clergyman, "without one word directly aimed at the conscience."

IX.

Do not aim at a degree of Originality, to which you are not equal, or of which the subject under consideration does not admit.

In the *highest* sense of the term, there are very few who can safely or successfully aspire to originality, even in their most elevated and most powerful efforts. There is, however, a kindred quality, of a humbler, yet scarcely of a less valuable, character, at which it is not only safe but desirable to aim. This quality I would denote by the term *individuality*, and I will endeavour to explain the sense in which I venture to employ it. The *minds* of men differ not less than their countenances. The face of every individual has its own peculiar aspect, its own peculiar expression. The features taken separately may bear resemblance to the features of many others, but the combination of the whole gives to every countenance an indescribable character of individuality, by which it is distinguished from that of every other human being. Analogous to these indications of individuality of countenance, are the characteristic

differences which obtain among *minds*. The leading faculties of the intellect, and the essential susceptibilities of the heart, belong to our common nature. But in different individuals, they exist in different degrees and in different proportions. They have received different degrees of cultivation and of excitement; they have been developed under widely different circumstances; they have been conversant with different classes of objects. The result is, that every individual is distinguished by his own peculiar habits of thinking and of expressing thought. He has his own plans of reading, of reflecting, and of investigating. He has his own processes of incorporating the thoughts of others, with the ideas which appear to be the spontaneous produce of his own mind. His mind may be compared to a mould which gives to the yielding substance its form and character, its "image and superscription." Now in proportion to the vigour and to the completeness of intellectual operations, and in proportion to the facility of carrying forward the processes of manly and independent thinking, the mind may be expected to obtain a character of individuality. Even when it avails itself of the thoughts of

others, it has the talent of making those thoughts its own, before it communicates them by discourse or by writing. The ideas which are derived from a variety of conversations, or of books, are so modified and arranged and expressed, that although they present to notice little which can be pronounced new or original, yet they exhibit an aspect characteristically different from that which they have received from the lips, or from the pen, of any other individual. They are obviously the result of the workings of a mind, which has the power of thought, and which finds delight and facility in the exertion of that power. When employed in elucidating, in enforcing, and in applying the "word of truth," they are the operations of the "workman that needeth not to be ashamed." He may not be endowed with the talent of bold and inventive originality, but he commands and he rewards the attention of his hearers, by the characteristics of an interesting individuality. He is sufficiently alive to a sense of what he is *not* capable of attaining, to preserve him from aspiring to the elevation of a towering genius; and he is sufficiently alive to a sense of what he *is* capable of effecting, to preserve him from

sinking into the degradation of a servile imitator, or of an adept at the concealment of plagiarisms.

X.

Study assiduously the best way of access to the Human Mind.

There are two great benefits which a minister should endeavour to derive from studying the philosophy of the human mind;—the one is, the improvement of his own intellectual faculties and habits;—the other is, the discovery of the most direct avenues to the minds and hearts of his hearers. If the former of these objects is to be especially pursued in a course of preparatory study, the latter should be no less the incessant object of solicitude, in the discharge of ministerial duties. Our constant aim should be to speak to the heart, through the medium of the intellect; and in order to do this, we must ascertain, by self-acquaintance, and by eagle-eyed observation, what it is which interests the human mind, and what it is which affects the human heart. "The minister of the gospel," observes Mr. Cecil, "should make experiments

on himself and others, in order to find out what will produce effect Nothing of this nature is lost upon mankind; it is worth its weight in gold for the service of a minister. He must remark too, what it is that puzzles and distracts the mind: all this is to be avoided: it may wear the garb of deep research, and great acumen, and extensive learning; but it is nothing to the mass of mankind. One of the most important considerations in makig an sermon, is to *disembarrass* it as much as possible. The sermons of the last century were like their large unwieldy chairs. Men have now a far more true idea of a chair. They consider it as a piece of furniture to sit upon, and they cut away from it every thing that embarrasses and encumbers it. It requires as much reflection and wisdom, to know what is *not* to be put into a sermon, as what is. A young minister should look around him, that he may see what has succeeded and what has not. Truth is to be his companion, but he is to clothe her so as to gain for her access. Truth must never bow to fashion or prejudice; but her garb may be varied. The man who labours to please his neighbour for his good to edification, has the mind that was in Christ. It

is a sinner trying to help a sinner. Even a feeble, but kind and tender man, will effect more than a genius, who is rough or artificial. There is danger, doubtless, of humouring others; and against this we must be on our guard. It is a kind and accommodating spirit at which we must aim."

In studying human nature, the young minister should be every where a learner. "He should imitate Gainsborough," observes Mr. Cecil. "Gainsborough transfused nature into his landscapes, beyond almost any of his contemporaries; because Gainsborough was every where the painter. Every remarkable feature or position of a tree—every fine stroke of nature—was copied into his pocket-book on the spot; and in his next picture, appeared with a life and vivacity and nature, which no strength of memory or imagination could have supplied."

In a recent critique on Lockhart's Life of Burns, there are the following remarks, which if applicable to that interesting Poet, in whose character there was so much to lament, ought to be characteristic of the minister of Christ.—"The passion traced before us has glowed in a living heart; the opinion he utters has risen

in his own understanding, and been a light to his own steps. He does not write from hearsay, but from sight and experience. It is the scenes he has lived and laboured amidst that he describes: those scenes, rude and humble as they are, then kindled beautiful emotions in his soul, noble thoughts and definite resolves; and he speaks forth what is in him not from any outward call of vanity or interest, but because his heart is too full to be silent. He speaks it too with such melody and modulation as he can in 'homely rustic phrase,' but it is his own and genuine. This is the grand secret for finding hearers, and retaining them: let him who would move and convince others, be first moved and convinced himself.—Be true, if you would be believed. Let a man but speak forth with genuine earnestness the thought, the emotion, the actual condition of his own heart; and other men—so strongly are we all knit together by the tie of sympathy—must and will give heed to him. In culture, in extent of view, we may stand above the speaker, or below him, but in either case, if he is earnest and sincere, he will find some response within us; for in spite of all casual varieties in outward rank or

inward, as face answers to face, so does the heart of man to man."

XI.

In your Preparations for the Pulpit, endeavour to derive from the subject on which you are about to preach, that Spiritual Benefit which you wish your hearers to receive.

"It is the remark of Owen," observes Mr. Cecil, "that it is not sufficiently considered, how much a minister's personal religion is exposed to danger, from the very circumstance of religion being his profession and employment. He must go through the acts of religion: he must put on the appearance of religion: he must utter the language and display the feelings of religion. It requires double diligence and vigilance, to maintain, under such circumstances, the spirit of religion. I have prayed: I have talked: I have preached: but now I should perish after all, if I did not feed on the bread which I have broken to others."

"Study your discourses," said the venerable Mr. Booth, "with a devotional disposition. To this you are bound by the very nature of the case, as a christian minister. For when the

Bible is before you, it is the word of God on which you meditate, and the work of God you are preparing to perform. It is reported of Dr. Cotton Mather, that in studying and preparing his sermons, his way was, at the end of every paragraph, to make a pause and to endeavour to make his own soul feel some holy impression of the truths contained in it. This he thought would be an excellent means of delivering his sermons with life and spirit, and of warming the hearts of his people; and so he found it." This holy and successful minister was, in the most extensive sense of the expression, "a man of prayer." His custom was "to pray for direction in the choice of his text and subject; and before he entered on a subject, which might require several sermons, or undertook to expound a larger portion of scripture, he entered on more special and solemn supplication, for all necessary aids."

The following testimony of Mr. Scott, as the result of his own experience, is deeply interesting. "The degree in which, after the most careful preparation for the pulpit, new thoughts, new arguments, animated addresses, often flow into my mind, while speaking to a congregation,

even on very common subjects, makes me feel as if I was quite another man, than when poring over them in my study. There will be inaccuracies, but, generally, the most striking things in my sermons are unpremeditated."

How exemplary in devotional preparation for the pulpit was that holy man of God, Mr. Fletcher, of Madely. "His preaching," says Mr. Gilpin, "was perpetually preceded, accompanied and succeeded by prayer. Before he entered upon the performance of this duty, he requested of the Great 'Master of assemblies,' a subject adapted to the conditions of his people, earnestly soliciting for *himself* wisdom, utterance and power; for *them* a serious frame, an unprejudiced mind, and a retentive heart. This necessary preparation for the profitable performance of his ministerial duties, was of longer or shorter duration, according to his peculiar state at the time; and frequently he could form a judgment of the effect which would be produced in public by the languor or the enlargement he experienced in private."

Philip Henry on one occasion thus wrote after a day of studious effort: "I forgot when I began, explicitly and expressly to crave help

from God, and the chariot wheels drove accordingly. Lord, forgive my omissions, and keep me in the way of duty."

"Content not yourselves to have the main work of grace," said that successful minister Mr. Baxter; "but be also very careful that your graces be kept in life and action, and that you preach to yourselves the sermons that you study, before you preach them to others. If you did this, for your own sakes, it would be no lost labour; but I am speaking to you upon the public account, that you may do it for the sake of the church. When your minds are in a heavenly frame, your people are likely to have the fruits of it. I confess I must speak it by lamentable experience, that I publish to my flock the distempers of my soul. When I let my heart grow cold, my preaching is cold. If it be not your daily, serious business, to study your own hearts, and subdue corruptions, and live as upon God, all will go amiss, and you will starve your auditors; or if you have but an affected fervency, you cannot expect a blessing to attend it. Watch, therefore, for the sake of yourselves and others. And more particularly, methinks a minister should take some special pains with his

heart, before he is to go to the congregation. If it be then cold, how is it to warm the hearts of the hearers! Go, therefore, specially to God for life. Read some rousing, awakening book; or meditate on the weight of the subject you are to speak of, that you may go, in the zeal of the Lord, into his house!"

"To preach the word," remarks Dr. Owen, "and not to follow it with prayer, is to believe its use, to neglect its end, and to cast away all the seed of the gospel at random."

To these dictates of wisdom and of experience from such men as Owen, and Baxter, and Mather, and Cecil, and Booth, what *can* be added? "Let *us* go and do likewise." That their example is imitated by some eminently holy and useful ministers of the present day, I have learned from their own lips. Some of them usually spend an hour or two immediately before going into the pulpit, in praying over their sermons and in preaching them on their knees to their own hearts. Is it surprising, that the "unction of the Holy One" should descend on their hearts, on their lips, and on their hearers, and that "much people should be added to the Lord?"

XII.

Attach due importance to the Devotional Parts of Public Worship, and be solicitous to conduct them in a spirit of Evangelical Fervour.

It is to be feared, that among the hearers of the gospel, there are not a few, who are in the habit of regarding the *sermon* as almost every thing, and the *prayers* as of very inferior interest and minor importance. And is there no ground of apprehension, that too near an approach to this state of feeling may be suspected also, in some who preach the gospel? Mr. Cecil went so far as to say, that "the leading defect in christian ministers, is the want of a devotional habit." And is not the truth of the remark too often exemplified? How often is there a display of energy, elevation and fervour in the sermon, so as to form a contrast with the dryness and coldness of the prayer! Does it not seem as if the best feelings of the soul were allowed to lie dormant in communion with God, whereas they are all in a state of excitement when a discourse is to be delivered to fellow men? And is there

not a defect in point of spirituality, as well as in point of fervour? The prayer may indeed be protracted to a sufficient and more than a sufficient length, and yet, be lamentably defective. There may be too many words, and yet, with regard to many blessings of the highest value, there may be too few petitions. There may be no want of petitions for temporal good; of petitions for individuals who request an interest in the prayers of the congregation; of petitions for our country, and for the general interests of the family of man: (and these should beyond a doubt occupy no inconsiderable space in the exercise of prolonged devotion); but in how few words, in the prayers of some ministers, are those petitions comprised, which have reference to blessings of the highest order—blessings which a fallen, guilty, dying creature should most anxiously desire and most fervently implore! How few are the petitions for the fulness of spiritual blessings, for which the *covenant* of grace most amply provides, and for which the *throne* of grace is primarily designed! How slight is the recognition of the mediatorial character and work of the Lord Jesus Christ! How slight is the reference to the glorious operations of the Holy

Spirit, and to the gracious and condescending promises of his aid, in answer to the prayer of faith! After studying the models of apostolic prayer which are left on record in the sacred writings, might not the devotional worshipper be in some instances almost tempted to think, that in conducting the devotions of the auditory, the minister had forgotten that the object of primary importance in approaching the throne of Him who heareth prayer, is to "obtain *mercy*, and to find *grace?*"

Are there not some of our *younger* ministers, who have been accustomed to think too little of the importance of the devotional exercises of public worship? Have they not much need to cultivate, in their hours of retirement, those feelings, which, when habitually prevalent, will be the best preparative both for the prayers and for the discourses of the pulpit? Should it not be their most earnest desire, with this view, that the word of Christ may dwell in them richly, and that the Spirit of Christ may be to them, in every act of worship, "the Spirit of grace and of supplication?"

XIII.

Cherish earnest Desires, and encouraging Expectations, of Success.

A man who engages with all his heart, and all his energies, in any pursuit, cannot but solicitously desire the prosperity of his undertaking; and certain it is, that the persevering efforts of his mind will bear some proportion to the expectations which he forms. The man of business, the man of letters, the lawyer, and the physician, are impelled to habitual diligence in their respective careers, by the prospect of realizing their hopes. Nor is the stimulus of hope needed, in any instance more, than in the discharge of the arduous and onerous functions of the christian ministry. Many circumstances may wear an unpromising aspect, and exert a depressing influence; a counteracting influence is then greatly to be desired; and this is chiefly to be felt in the anticipations of growing usefulness and augmented prosperity.

"If you would prosper in your work," said Mr. Baxter, "be sure to keep up earnest desires and expectations of success. If your hearts be not set on the end of your labours; and you

long not to see the conversion and edification of your hearers, and do not study and preach in hope, you are not likely to see much fruit of it.—Let all that preach for Christ and men's salvation, be unsatisfied, till they have the thing they preach for. When a man only studies what to say, and how with commendation to spend the hour, and looks no more after it, unless it be to know what people think of his own abilities, and thus holds on from year to year, I must needs think that this man preaches for himself, and not for Christ, how excellently soever he may seem to do it. I know that our acceptance is not according to the fruit, but according to the degree of our labour; but he cannot be a faithful labourer, who does not long for the success of his labours, and is not grieved at their apparent failure."

The actual amount of success resulting from the ministry of any individual, in any given period, it is indeed impossible correctly to estimate. We should be on our guard, lest, according to the characteristic tendencies of our own minds, we should either appreciate that success at too low, or at too high a rate. Some men are constitutionally inclined to the former, and some

to the latter extreme. Those of the one class should be reminded, that much good may have been effected, which has not yet been developed; and much which may never be fully apparent, till the day of final disclosure: those of the other class may need to be apprised—"that all is not gold which glitters." "Many evangelical and popular preachers," says the pious author of the 'Reign of Grace,' "have greatly overrated the usefulness of their own labours. For the longer I live the more apprehensive I am, that the number of *real* converts, among those who profess the genuine gospel, is comparatively small."

XIV.

Exercise a humble and entire Dependence on the promised Influences of the Holy Spirit.

Not one single truth, in the whole compass of divine revelation, is more firmly established, than the necessity of the influences of the Spirit of God, in order to the desired effect of divine truth upon the heart of man. Not one single promise is given with more explicitness, than the assurances of that aid, to those who ask it. If the persuasion of the necessity, and the

promise of the grant, of this sacred influence, should dwell upon the mind of every christian, what should be the desire and the dependence of every christian minister? If he be himself enlightened and renewed, the doctrine of divine influence will assuredly be the grand support, and the grand encouragement, of all those hopes of success which he delights to cherish. For the copious effusion of the influences of the Holy Spirit on himself, and on his hearers, he will most earnestly offer his supplications at the throne of heavenly grace. On this subject of deepest interest and vital importance, I cannot refrain from citing at some length the pointed and pungent remarks of Dr. Chalmers, in his sermon on the necessity of the Spirit, to give effect to the preaching of the gospel:—

"There is a dark and settled depravity in the human character, which maintains its gloomy and obstinate resistance to all our warnings and all our arguments. There is a spirit working in the children of disobedience, which no power of human eloquence can lay.—The minister who enters into this field of conflict may have zeal, and talents, and eloquence. His heart may be smitten with the love of the truth, and

his mind be fully fraught with its arguments. Thus armed, he may come forth among his people, flushed with the mighty enterprise of turning souls from the dominion of Satan unto God. In all the hope of victory, he may discharge the weapons of his warfare among them. Week after week he may reason with them out of the Scriptures. Sabbath after Sabbath he may declaim, he may demonstrate, he may put forth every expedient; he may at one time set in array before them the terrors of the law; at another he may try to win them by the free offer of the gospel; and in the proud confidence of success, he may think that nothing can withstand him, and that the heart of every hearer must give way, before the ardour of his zeal, and the power of his invincible arguments. Yes: they may admire him, but the question we have to ask is, will they be converted by him? They may even go so far as to allow that it is all very true which he says. He may be their favourite preacher, and when he opens his exhortations upon them, there may be a deep and a solemn attention in every countenance. But how is the heart coming on all the while? How do these people live, and what evidence

are they giving of being born again under the power of his ministry?

"Look to all that is visible in the life of the Apostle Paul.—Never were the labours of human exertion more faithfully rendered,—never were the workings of a human instrument put forth with greater energy. But, while he did as much toward the extension of the christian faith, as if the whole success of the cause depended upon his doing,—he prayed as much, and as fervently, for this object, as if all his doings were of no consequence.—He who looked so busy, and whose hand was so constantly engaged in the work that was before him, looked for all his success, to that help which cometh from the sanctuary of God. There was his eye directed. Thence alone did he expect a blessing upon his endeavours. He wrought, and that with diligence too, because God bade him; but he also prayed, and that with equal diligence, because God had revealed to him, that plant as he may, and water as he may, God alone giveth the increase. He did homage to the will of God, by the labours of the ever-working minister,—and he did homage to the power of God, by the devotions of the

ever-praying minister.—The Apostle kept both working and praying, and with him they formed two distinct emanations of the same principle; and while there are many who make these christian graces to neutralize each other, the judicious and the clear-sighted Paul, who had received the spirit of a sound mind, could give his unembarrassed vigour to both these exercises, and combine, in his own example, the utmost diligence in doing, with the utmost dependence on him, who can alone give to that doing all its fruit and all its efficacy."

"In preaching," said Mr. Cecil, "I have no encouragement but the belief of a continued divine operation.—To bring a man to love God —to love the law of God, while it condemns him—to loath himself before God—to tread the earth under his feet—to hunger and thirst after God in Christ—*with man this is impossible!* But God has said *it shall be done;* and bids me go forth and preach, that *by me, as his instrument,* he may effect these great ends; and *therefore I go.*"

Let us then pray for the Holy Spirit, believing that God is really disposed to grant us the heavenly gift. Shall we not confidently

expect that which God has absolutely promised to give, and which it is unquestionably for his glory to bestow? Now is it not for the glory of God, that churches should be edified and multiplied, and that much people should be added to the Lord? Is it not thus that the Redeemer is to see of the travail of his soul and to be satisfied? Is it not to effect purposes such as these, that he has ascended the throne of universal sovereignty, and that he directs at his pleasure all events? Let me ask, further, is it not perfectly easy for God to grant a revival of religion among *us*, and among other British churches, by granting the abundant effusion of his Spirit? Are not the hearts of all men subject to his power? Are not all their faculties under his control? With perfect facility he can fix in their consciences convictions of sin; he can open the eyes of their understanding; he can lead them to discern their need of a Saviour; he can induce them to abandon every fallacious reliance; he can effectually urge them to "flee for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before them;" he can accomplish in them "all the good pleasure of his goodness and the work of faith with power."

Why then should we not expect this "glorious working of his mighty power?" He has recently "made bare his arm," in the sight of a distant nation, and has revealed his power "as in the days of old." Be it remembered also, that these instances of revivals in religion are, in truth, so many instances of the success of prayer. Let this then, be the confidence that we can say we have in God, "that if we ask any thing, according to his will, he heareth us; and if we know that he hears us, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him."—"Before they call," he has said, "I will answer, and while they are yet speaking I will hear." "If you never expect a revival," said an American pastor, whose church was soon afterwards signally favoured, "you will never enjoy one. But if you expect it, you will desire it, you will pray for it; and your efforts will all correspond with this high expectation. You will look to God, and rely on God in all you do.—O Christians, who can tell, but the day of blessing is near? While bowing you knees, like the prophet, on the top of Carmel, some herald of mercy may tell you of 'a little cloud,' which, though 'no

bigger than a man's hand,' may soon cover the heavens, and pour down the refreshing shower." *

XV.

Endeavour to adopt the most interesting and efficient methods of conveying Religious Instruction to the young.

Is it not in early life, that the best susceptibilites of the heart are most easily excited and directed? Is it not an instructive fact, that among those who have been religiously educated, the greater number of real conversions to God may be traced to an early date? Are not those who at present belong to the youthful class of the congregation, after a short period has elapsed, to constitute the strength of the society, whether civil or religious, with which they may be connected? Is it not most desirable that, even from early youth, they should be accustomed to regard their pastor as their friend, and to feel the attachment which grows out of the persuasion, that he is most affectionately desirous of

* See the Author's Pastoral Discourses on Revivals in Religion.

promoting their truest interests? Are not those ministers usually the most happy, and the most successful, who display the kindest solicitude for the juvenile division of their flock? Does it not then become an object of primary importance, to devise and to adopt the best methods of guiding them into the ways of wisdom and the paths of peace?

With a view to the attainment of this grand object, various plans have been attended with encouraging success. It has been found highly beneficial to address to the young, at stated periods, discourses particularly adapted to their character and circumstances; and many are now the ornaments of our churches, who ascribe their first and most decided impressions of divine truth to these effusions of pastoral solicitude. But still greater importance is to be attached to more frequent and more familiar methods of instruction, in which the precise plan may be adjusted by that practical wisdom, which will take into view the education, the habits, the intellectual attainments, and the degree of leisure, by which the greater number may be distinguished. If they have advanced beyond the age ordinarily compatible with catechetical

instruction, their attention may be directed, with advantage, to a familiar exposition of some appropriate portions of scripture—or to a series of familiar lectures on the most important points of theological truth—or to the perusal, at their own convenience, of books calculated to impress upon their minds the leading principles of divine revelation, on which the minister may offer his own remarks, for the purpose of additional illustration and enforcement. It is impossible to calculate the benefit which may arise from the persevering employment of such plans as these, when pursued with a devotional spirit, and with earnest supplication for that divine influence, without which the weighty reasoning of Paul and the winning eloquence of Apollos, even in happiest combination, would be altogether inefficient.

But the most beneficial of all the plans which can be adopted for the advantage of the young is, I am fully persuaded, the method of Bible Class instruction, which, I trust, will at length become as general in this country as it is already among the American churches.

"The leading *object* of Bible classes may be stated in one sentence. It is, to convey to the

minds of the young, as accurate and extensive a knowledge as may be found practicable, of the most important contents of the Bible. It is impossible to conceive of any effort more in unison with the grand object of a minister of the gospel, than the attempt to render intelligible and interesting to the young of every class, the vital truths, the pure precepts, the instructive histories, and the precious promises of the word of God.

"The characteristic principle of Bible class tuition is that of *catechetical* instruction. This principle has the sanction of immemorial usage; having been adopted, with success, by the wisest preceptors in successive generations. Catechisms, without number, not only for the purposes of religion, but also of science, may be regarded as so many attestations to the excellence of the general system. But it is important to bear in mind, that the application of the principle is not dependent on a printed form or on a fixed series of questions and of answers; neither does it necessarily require the labour of committing to memory specific phrases or sentences. If certain truths or facts have been previously conveyed to the mind of the learner,

with simplicity, with clearness, and with force, it may be easy to the teacher to put to the test, and to elicit, the amount of knowledge which the learner may have acquired; and it may not be difficult to the learner, after being a little accustomed to the effort, to express the ideas he has imbibed, in terms the most familiar to his own mind.

"Catechisms have been composed for different ages, and for different gradations of progress in knowledge; yet without a succession of catechisms, burdensome to the learner, it is exceedingly difficult to adapt the conveyances of truth to the diversified capacities of children and the different stages of advancement observable among many, even of the same age. Difficulties on the part of the teacher often increase rather than diminish, as the childhood of the scholar ripens into youth. Reluctance to the continued repetition of a catechism often shows itself, even if a *Minister* be the catechist; and few comparatively continue to be his catechumens, when arrived at that period of youth which is, beyond comparison, the most important, as connected with the growth and development of the human character. Now this is the very period of life in which

the principle of Bible class instruction may be brought to bear with most promising effect, upon the opening and inquiring mind. If there be a desire of knowledge, and that desire be directed to the treasures of divine revelation, is it not unspeakably important, that the minister of the gospel should avail himself of this state of mind, with a view to the conveyance of that truth which maketh wise unto salvation?

"Let it be supposed, then, that some book of scripture, such as one of the Gospels, or the Acts of the Apostles, has been selected for familiar explanation. Either at a public lecture or in a meeting with the young, a chapter or part of a chapter, may be elucidated with clearness and simplicity of statement, and pressed with affectionate earnestness on the conscience and the heart. The young people of the congregation may be divided into classes, at the discretion of the minister. Two classes—a senior and a junior—may include all the young females of the congregation; and two additional classes may be formed; the one for boys, the other for young men. Let each class meet separately, once in the week, or once in a fortnight; and let plain and pointed questions be addressed to them

individually, of such a character as to call forth the knowledge they have acquired by the previous explanation of the chapter, and by their private study of the passage. It may be found equally to facilitate the labours, both of the teacher and of the learners, to use such a help as is to be found in 'Judson's Scripture Questions,' employed to a great extent in the American Bible classes, and reprinted in London, at a very low price, by the Religious Tract Society.

"If such a course of Bible instruction be steadily pursued by ministers of the gospel, with earnest prayer for 'an unction from the Holy One;' advantages of the very highest character may be expected to result.

"1. The christian pastor will be brought into more immediate and intimate contact with a most interesting and important part of the flock intrusted to his care.

"He will discover the most direct avenues, both to the heart and to the intellect, of the different classes of the young. *He* will love *them*, and *they* will love *him*. They will venerate him as a father, and confide in him as a friend. His own qualifications for usefulness among them will increase, by a growing aptitude for the right

communication of truth, and a growing delight in the employment.

"2. An impulse will be given to parental diligence among the people of his charge.

"It has been said that some parents have declined sending their children for the catechetical instructions of the pastor, lest their deficiency of scriptural knowledge should be regarded as a reproach to their parents. When it is expected that children should be sent for such instruction, it will rouse the parents who have been negligent, and give an additional incentive and encouragement to such as are diligent. Pious parents will know how to value their pastor, as a coadjutor with themselves, in training up their children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord: they will 'esteem him very highly in love for his work's sake.'

"3. Pulpit instructions will be rendered more available.

"On how many minds, especially among the poor and the young, the discourses of the pulpit produce no effect! They are altogether inefficient. They are not even understood. They proceed on the supposition of a habit of attention which is not acquired, and of a facility of

apprehension not attained. But the discipline of the Bible class is one of the most efficient means of mental culture ever employed. Every faculty is roused, and placed in requisition. The judgment, the memory, and the power of attention are vigorously exercised, and progressively strengthened. Where these classes are in operation, sermons are now heard with a listening ear, and, in many cases, by the grace of God, with a susceptible heart. The young people, having learned in the Bible class to *love* their minister, as well as to *understand* him, consider themselves as personally concerned, and as personally addressed, when he dispenses the word of life.

"4. Young persons will be qualified for the important engagements of Sabbath school Teachers.

"It is in the highest degree desirable, that the children in Sabbath schools should spend their time on the Lord's Day, as much as possible, in obtaining the elements of the knowledge of Christ, and not in the merely preparatory task of learning to read. It is equally important that their teachers should themselves be taught of God, and qualified to teach the children the way

of salvation. Let, then, the teachers form a part of the senior Bible classes; and having been first instructed and examined by the minister, on a portion of the word of God, let the teachers, in their respective classes, explain that passage to the children. If they have also the aid of such a book as 'Judson's Scripture Questions,' it will be found to render very valuable assistance.

"Without dwelling at greater length on the advantages which may be anticipated from such a course of Bible education, will it not be readily conceded, that those already specified, present sufficient incentives to enter on the system recommended? May it not be hoped, that God will graciously vouchsafe his special blessing to labours such as these? May they not be expected to contribute most powerfully to that revival of the power of vital religion, which many ministers and churches so ardently desire, so earnestly implore? Let holy diligence be combined with humble dependence, and persevering supplications, and what may we not expect? 'Prove me now herewith, (we may regard the Lord as saying to us,) and see if I will not pour you out a blessing, so that there shall not be room enough to receive it!' It is no new

experiment. It has been tried with increasing success, in Scotland and in America, and, more recently, by ministers and private Christians among ourselves." *

XVI.

Endeavour to regulate, on principles which an enlightened conscience will approve, the time devoted to Pastoral Visits and Friendly Intercourse.

"There are two things," says Dr. Mason, in his Discourse on resigning his pastoral charge at New-York, "in which the state of the churches now, differs materially from their state in primitive times. In the first place, they had inspired teachers; who could, therefore, spend the whole week in exhorting, confirming, and consoling their converts, without infringing on their preparations for the Lord's day. Our situation is quite different: close and habitual study are necessary for us. And if we cannot get time to attend to it, our ministrations grow uninteresting,

* Address of the Committee of the Sunday School Union to Ministers of the Gospel, (written by the Author at their request.)

and our congregations lean. In the next place, the primitive churches never permitted themselves to suffer for want of labourers. *Our* economical plan is, to make one pastor do the work which was anciently done by three or four, and the very natural consequence follows;—the work is badly done, or the workman is sacrificed.—If we were to visit as much as our people are good enough to wish, and unreasonable enough to expect, we should not have an hour left for our proper business; we could make no progress in the knowledge of the scriptures; and not one would be able to preach a sermon worthy of a sensible man's hearing."

The primary objects of pastoral sympathy are the sick and the afflicted. Frequently repeated must be visits to those whom trouble has brought more feelingly to need, and more anxiously to desire, the instructions or consolations of divine truth; and whether they be rich or poor; whether they have been friendly or unkind; they are equally the objects of the most tender fidelity and persevering solicitude.

When these visits have been paid, the diligent pastor will endeavour to exercise a wise and kind superintendence over the rest of his flock. If

his visits can neither be so frequent nor so protracted as might be wished, it will be an object of his anxious desire to ascertain the spiritual state, and to advance, by every possible method, the spiritual prosperity, of the people of his charge.

It is advisable to allot a certain portion of time to the work of pastoral visiting. That allotment should be made with an enlightened and conscientious regard to all the claims of ministerial duty. In most cases it will probably be found that portions of time, amounting in extent to, at least, one entire day in every week, will be indispensably necessary for this purpose; and if more than this can be given, without neglecting other duties, the result, by the blessing of God, may prove incalculably beneficial.

Dr. Cotton Mather was accustomed to devote one or two afternoons every week to this pastoral occupation, and usually to pay four or five visits in the course of a long afternoon. After addressing the various members of the family, according to their ages and relations, he frequently proposed to the younger branches of the family, when about to take leave of them, questions such as these, for their subsequent consideration in retirement: — "What have I

been doing since I came into the world, about the great errand upon which God sent me into the world?—If God should now call me out of the world, what would become of me throughout eternal ages?—Have I ever yet by faith presented my perishing soul to the Lord Jesus, for righteousness and salvation?" Such was the success of this eminent servant of God, that even in the first year of his ministry, he had reason to believe that he was made the instrument of converting at least thirty souls!

"He that has the happy talent of parlour preaching," said Dr. Watts, "has sometimes done more for Christ and souls in the space of a few minutes, than by the labour of many hours and days in the usual course of preaching in the pulpit."

The indefatigable Joseph Alleine, (with an intensity of effort which undermined his constitution and shortened his life) was accustomed to devote five afternoons every week to pastoral visits: and "he often blessed God for the great success that he had in these exercises, saying that God had made him as instrumental of good to souls this way, as by public preaching."

The young minister who wishes to ascertain

his duty as regards this difficult and momentous part of the pastoral charge, will consult his best interests by reading the awakening addresses of Baxter on this subject, in his Reformed Pastor. He urges, with his accustomed energy, the motives which should induce ministers to the performance of this duty: he answers all the objections which can be supposed to arise in the mind of a person disinclined to enter upon its discharge; and he gives a variety of admirable directions for practical guidance. A few short passages I will here introduce. "This practice will be an excellent means of helping you in preaching. For as the physician's work is half done, when he understands the disease, so, when you are well acquainted with your people's case, you will know what to preach on; and it will furnish you with matter for your sermons better than the study of many hours."—"This serious dealing with sinners for their salvation, will help you to far deeper apprehensions of the saving principles of religion, than you can get by any other means; and a little more knowledge of these is worth all the other knowledge in the world." In reply to the objection that this duty is very laborious, he thus writes:—"What have we our

time and strength for, but to lay them out for God? What is a candle made for, but to burn? Burned and wasted we must be; and is it not fitter it should be in lighting men to heaven, and in working for God, than in living to the flesh? How little difference is there between the pleasure of a long and of a short life, when they are both at an end? What comfort will it be to you at death, that you lengthened your life by shortening your work? He that works much, lives much. Our life is to be esteemed according to the ends and works of it, and not according to the mere duration. Seneca says of a drone, *Ibi jacet, non ibi vivit; et diu fuit, non diu vixit.* Will it not comfort us more at death, to review a short time faithfully spent, than a long life spent unfaithfully? As for visits and civilities, if they be of greater use than our ministerial employments, you may forbear preaching for them, and you may also forbear this private work. But if it be otherwise, how dare you make them a pretence for neglecting so great a duty? If you yet seek to please men, you are no longer the servants of Christ. He that dare spend his life in flesh-pleasing, and man-pleasing, is bolder

than I am. And he that dare waste his time in compliments, doth little consider what he hath to do with it. O that I could but improve my time, according to my convictions of the necessity of improving it! He that hath looked death in the face as oft as I have done, I will not thank him if he value his time. I profess I wonder at those ministers, who have time to spare for recreations two or three hours, yea, whole days together, that can sit an hour together in vain discourse, and spend whole days in complimental visits, and journeys to such ends."

In many of the late revivals of religion in the American Churches, Family Visitation has been found eminently useful; by which is meant "visiting a family for the express purpose of religious enquiry, in order to ascertain the religious state of the heads of the family, and of every member; the amount of their Bible knowledge, and the manner in which they perform their acknowledged duties; and especially to ascertain whether or not they are seeking God. The visit is purely pastoral; and as it is by no means considered requisite for the physician to travel all round the circle of general topics

before he can venture to allude to the purposes of his visit, so neither is this deemed necessary for the minister; he feels at liberty to enter at once upon enquiries relating to the soul. These inquiries are often put in the plainest and most pointed form to the individual alone, and no evasion is permitted. If the question be put, Are you living in the habit of prayer? and the answer be evasive—it would immediately be followed by the plain question,—"Did you pray this morning? Had you communion with God?" Worldly conversation, perplexing enquiries, doctrinal disputes, find no place; the only subject is the application of the great doctrine of salvation to the consciences of the hearers according to their capacities and attainments.*

XVII.

Cultivate, with daily solicitude, Spirituality of Mind.

"They that are after the flesh," observes the apostle, "do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit, the things of the

* See Facts and Documents appended to the Author's Pastoral Discourses on Revivals, &c.

Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." As a *christian*, your *personal* concern, and as a *minister*, your *professional* concern, is with "the things of the Spirit;" what then can be more out of character,—what can be more obstructive to comfort or to usefulness, than the prevalence of a carnal mind? It will generate an inaptitude for all the elevated and spiritual duties of the sacred office, and render irksome those engagements of the study and of the pulpit, which ought to be highly pleasurable. Let there be, on the contrary, that habit of mind which is a combination of "life and peace," and the avocations of the christian ministry will become elements of the purest delight. With all the energy and excitement of the noblest "life," there will be blended the serene composure of the truest "peace," even "the peace which passeth all understanding, which is able to keep the heart and mind" from all which would disturb and annoy.

"There are various characteristics," observes Mr. Cecil, "of a spiritual mind. A spiritual mind turns to God, as the needle to the pole. A spiritual mind maintains converse with God.

It looks to God for wisdom for the day, for the hour, for the business in hand. It refers its affairs to God.—It has something of the nature of the sensitive plant. There is a holy shrinking from evil.—A spiritual mind is a mortified mind. The church of Rome talks much of mortification, but her mortification is not radical and spiritual. Simon Stylites will willingly mortify himself on his pillar, if he can bring people around him to pray to *him* to pray for *them*. But the spiritual mind must mortify itself in whatever would retard its ascent toward heaven: it must rise on the wings of faith and hope and love. A spiritual mind is a sublime mind. It has a vast and extended view. It has seen the glory and beauty of Christ, and cannot therefore admire, as others, the goodliness of things seen and temporal; even as Christ himself, says Fenelon, had seen his Father's house, and could not therefore be captivated with the glory of the earthly temple!" "Whenever," said Mr. Henry Martyn, "I can say, 'thy will be done, teach me to do thy will, O God, for thou art my God,' it is like throwing ballast out of an air-balloon, my soul ascends immediately, and light and happiness shine around me."

Eminently distinguished by spirituality of mind was Mr. Fletcher of Madely. "He appeared," says Mr. Gilpin, "to enjoy an uninterrupted fellowship with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. Every day was with him a day of solemn self-dedication, and every hour an hour of praise or prayer.—He was familiar with invisible objects, and constantly walked as in the presence of God. To those who were much conversant with him, he appeared as an inhabitant of a better world; so perfectly dead was he to the enjoyments of the present life, and so wholly detached from its anxious cares."

Would you then cherish and maintain a divine spirituality of mind? Would you live under the power of the world to come? Would you cultivate the feelings which give most valuable excitement to the intellectual energies required in the discharge of the christian ministry? Surrender, then, your inner man, your whole soul, to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Yield yourselves in mind and heart to his life-giving and peace-inspiring influences. Aspire daily to the honour and delight of being the 'Temple of the Holy Ghost.' Remember that as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the

sons of God; but that if any man (whether in public or private station) have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."

Happy is the minister whose habitual state of mind resembles that of the excellent Cotton Mather, as exhibited in the following extract from his private papers:—

"The thoughts of Christ," says he, "are become exceedingly frequent with me; I meditate on his glorious person, as the eternal and the incarnate Son of God; and I behold the infinite God as coming to me, and meeting with me, in this blessed Mediator. I fly to him on multitudes of occasions every day, and am impatient if many minutes have passed without some recourse to him.

"Every now and then, I rebuke myself for having been so long without any thoughts of my lovely Saviour. How can I bear to keep at such a distance from him! I then look up to him, and say, O my Saviour, draw near unto me! O come to dwell in my soul, and help me to cherish some thoughts wherein I shall enjoy thee.

"Upon this I set myself to think of his glories, his merits, his pattern, his maxims; what

he has done, and what he will do for us. I find the subject inexhaustible. And after I have been thus employed in the day, I fall asleep at night in the midst of some meditation on the glory of my Saviour; so 'I fall asleep in Jesus,' and when I awake in the night, I do 'on my bed seek him whom my soul loveth.' The desires of my soul still carry me to him who was last in my thoughts when I fell asleep.

"I find that where Christ comes, a wondrous light, life, and peace come with him, together with strength to go through service and sufferings. The holiness and happiness to which I am introduced by this way of living, is better to me than all the enjoyments of this world. No affluence of worldly wealth, no, nor any advances in learning, and improvement in my knowledge of the sciences, could transport me so much.

"The blessedness of the heavenly world lies in our being with Christ; and by being with the Lord, and beholding his glory, by believing and affecting thoughts of him, I have enjoyed a sort of heaven upon earth. The light and peace, the joy, strength, and purity with which this fills my mind, are an earnest and foretaste of heaven.

"How many, O Lord, are my thoughts of Thee! the occasions on which, and the means by which I cherish such thoughts, cannot be reckoned up in order.

"When I see any thing excellent in any man, it leads my thoughts to the superior excellencies of Christ my Saviour; and when I behold the miseries of any of my fellow-creatures, I think on the miseries from which I am delivered by my Saviour; and on my obligations to my kind deliverer. I dare not let my mind be idle, as I walk in the streets; I rebuke myself, and I make my moan to Heaven, if I have gone many steps without one thought of my Saviour.

XVIII.

Cultivate and display Christian Zeal for the general interests of true Religion, both at home and abroad.

With all the feelings of *pastoral* solicitude, never let the christian minister circumscribe his desires or his exertions, by the limits of his own peculiar sphere. Let him feel, not as an insulated being, labouring in a detached part of the vineyard of his Lord, regardless of his fellow-

labourers who are employed with equal diligence in other scenes of exertion; but let him feel a lively interest in the efforts and the successes of all, who aim at the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom. Let him sedulously endeavour to excite and to maintain, in full vigour, the same spirit of benevolent activity among the people of his charge. By stimulating them to unite in *doing* good, he will direct them to the most effectual means of *gaining* good. He will most assuredly promote their own prosperity, by animating their zeal and liberality in aid of the cause of bibles, and the cause of missions, and the cause of schools, and the cause of tracts, and all the methods of doing good, on a larger or a smaller scale, which fall within the limits of their means and opportunities. Much of pastoral wisdom consists in giving full and steady and well-directed excitement, to the various classes in the church and congregation, who may be actively and appropriately employed, in the various departments of christian benevolence.

In the midst, however, of all his public engagements, let not the young minister venture to extend, without due consideration and needful restriction, his pledges of personal attendance on

the meetings of benevolent and religious societies. A senior minister, whose mind is enriched with ample resources for efforts which habit has progressively facilitated, may, with impunity, make a sacrifice of hours and days, which a junior minister would make, at the hazard of his peace, of his health, and of his usefulness. Time, and time in large and unbroken portions, he must secure, for the acquirement and communication of scriptural knowledge, unless he would abandon at once the hope and the effort of making progress in the lofty and difficult attainments of pulpit excellence. "The habit I recommend," said Dr. Paley, in his Charge to the younger clergy, "as the foundation of almost all the good ones, is retirement. Learn to live alone." On the well proportioned union of retired and diligent study, with social intercourse and public engagements, depends, in no small degree, the efficiency as well as the happiness of the pastor's life.

An extraordinary and most admirable specimen of zeal, assiduity and success in doing good, is exhibited in the life of Dr. Cotton Mather.

"It was the great delight of his whole life to do good. His heart was set upon it; he did not

therefore content himself with merely embracing opportunities of doing good that occasionally offered, but he every now and then set apart some time on purpose to devise good; and he seldom came into any company without having this directly in his view.

"It was constantly one of his first thoughts in the morning, 'What good may I do this day?' And that he might more certainly attend to the various branches of so large and comprehensive a duty, he resolved this general question, What good shall I do? into several particulars, one of which he took into consideration, while he was dressing himself, every morning; and as soon as he came into his study, he set down some brief hints of his meditations upon it. He had ordinarily a distinct question for each morning in the week.

"His question for the *Lord's-day* morning constantly was, 'What shall I do as a pastor of a church, for the good of the flock under my charge?' Upon this he considered what subjects were most suitable and seasonable for him to preach on; what families of his flock were to be visited, and with what particular view; and how he might make his ministry still more acceptable and useful.

"His question for *Monday morning* was, 'What shall I do for the good of my own family?' Here he considered himself as a husband, a father, and a master. He contrived how he might best promote the spiritual edification of his consort; as what good books he should put into her hands to read, how he should order his prayers for her and with her, when they were praying together by themselves in his study; and what hints might be proper for him to give her, for her edification. He considered what parts of the education of his children were to be chiefly pursued, and by what means; and what admonitions or instructions were proper to be given to his servants, that so he and his whole house might fear the Lord.

"His common question for *Tuesday morning* was, 'What good shall I do for my relations abroad?' of whom he kept a list by him, as far as to the children of his cousins-german. He considered what he should pray for, in behalf of each of them; and what advices and seasonable admonitions would be proper for him to give any of them, either by word of mouth, or by writing; or what books of piety he should put into their hands.

"His stated question for *Wednesday morning* was, 'What good shall I do for the churches of the Lord, and the more general interests of religion in the world?' For this end he considered what proposals for the advancement of religion he could make to other ministers; what books might be proper for him to write and publish; and by what means he might help to spread the 'savour of the knowledge of Christ,' far and wide in the world.

"His question for *Thursday morning* was, 'What good may I do in the several societies to which I am related?' For he was connected with more than twenty societies of a religious nature, several of which were formed by him, and all of them were, in some measure, under his patronage and care.

"The question for *Friday morning* was constantly this, 'What special subject of affliction, and objects of compassion, may I take under my particular care; and what shall I do for them?' Upon this he turned his thoughts to the poor of his flock, of whom he kept a distinct catalogue, and to any other persons, that he knew of, who were either in outward affliction, or spiritual trouble. He would single out one of these

afflicted cases, to be particularly considered on this morning, that he might contrive the best means he could for their relief and comfort.

"His *Saturday morning's* question related more immediately to himself, and to the concerns of his own soul. It was, 'What more have I to do for the interest of God in my own heart and life?' Upon this he would set himself to recollect, what sins he had committed, and what mercies he had received; and to consider what consequent obligations he was under to serve and honour God, to the utmost of his capacity and power. He would consider also, how much it concerned him to be what he exhorted others to be, and to experience that divine life in his own soul, which he recommended to others in his sermons or his writings; and on this account he would sometimes, especially on the Lord's-day evening, read some of his own books of devotion, in order to impress his own heart afresh with the sentiments contained in them."

The following directions for doing good are taken (with some abridgment) from "*the New York Observer.*"

1. Watch for opportunities.
2. Carefully select your objects.
3. Do every day what belongs to the day.
4. When you gain an advantage, follow it up.
5. What you do, "do with your might."
6. Attempt great things.
7. Undertake not too much.

XIX.

Propose to yourself as a Model, the character of the Apostle Paul.

Great advantages will arise from studying the lives of eminent christians, and especially of eminent ministers. Their biography will be replete with powerful excitements to diligence, to devotion, to humility, to zeal. While it cannot fail to operate upon the mind with the power of an energetic stimulus, it will also suggest practical hints of the highest value, adapted to assist "the man of God" in his unwearied efforts to become "thoroughly furnished unto every good work." But if signal advantages may be secured by familiarity with the lives of such men as Philip Henry, and Cotton Mather, and Martyn, and Scott, what shall be said of

the benefits accruing from the frequent study of the most eminent of all the servants of God in lofty attainment and wide-spreading usefulness—"the Apostle of the Gentiles!" "Next to our Lord Jesus Christ," (observes Dr. Mason, than whom no man living is better qualified to appreciate or to pourtray the character in question,) "the name which figures most gloriously in the early stages of the christian story, is that of the Apostle Paul. The grandeur of his mind, his intellectual and moral magnanimity, his heroic devotion, his patience in suffering; his powerful genius, his decision, his eloquence, his zeal, shine in every page of his writings, raise the admiration and awe the spirits of his readers, and make them feel that they enter into communion with a being of a superior order. But it is not that peculiar greatness which was inseparable from every act of the man, and excites our veneration while it forbids our rivalship, that creates our deepest interest in his character. Our understandings may be penetrated with light which has no power of warming our hearts. The most profound respect does not necessarily call forth our love. Our affections must be *won;* they

to those who differ in opinion. Be assured that the more perfect and the more intimate is your acquaintance with excellent and useful men of other denominations, the greater will be your delight on discovering, that the points of attraction outnumber and overpower the points of repulsion; and that real differences present an aspect much less formidable than those which are imaginary. You will acquire the equitable and desirable habit of realizing their circumstances and placing yourselves in their situation; and of asking your own hearts, what, in all probability, would have been your predilections and prejudices, had you been descended of such parents, and educated in such schools, and trained in such habits, and accustomed to such society. It is not difficult to perceive, that the result of these ideal transfers of yourself into their former or present situations, will greatly dispose the mind to put a candid construction on opinions which quadrate not with your own, and which you still regard as inaccurate and misguided. Let a man be once aware of the defects of many of his own processes of reasoning, on subjects which call forth his partialities or his antipathies; let him

be once aware of the extent to which he is himself indebted to education and early habits, even for some of his most correct opinions on subjects not essential; and his own heart will become a powerful monitor, to caution him against the unreasonableness of withholding his brotherly regards from those whose opinions are nearly, if not precisely, what his own would have been, under similar circumstances.

XXI.

Do full justice to the talents and excellencies of other Ministers, without the spirit of rivalry or jealousy.

There are not a few preachers of the gospel in the present day, among different denominations of christians, whose talents are not only eminent by the order of intellect to which they belong, but also in a high degree attractive and commanding. If the consideration of this naturally affords pleasure to the mind of the *hearer* of the gospel, should it not afford at least equal delight to the mind of the *preacher* of the gospel? Should he not unfeignedly rejoice, that the truth which saves the soul is exhibited with

greater power of argument, or with greater felicity of illustration, or with greater warmth of pathos, than he himself is able to display? Instead of unworthy and ungenerous attempts to detract from the eloquence and excellence ascribed to those who are high in public estimation, ought he not to rejoice in the popularity attendant on captivating talents, when those talents are employed in advocating the cause of Christ? It is an indication of a mean and ignoble spirit, to betray an habitual reluctance to acknowledge and to admire superior abilities on the part of others. It is most unworthy of a minister of Christ, to betray the slightest approach to a spirit of jealousy and rivalry. This spirit is generally found to reside either in little and contracted minds, fearfully apprehensive of the consequences which may result from a comparison with superior talents; or in vain and ambitious minds, aspiring to the highest degree of public applause, and tremblingly alive at the appearance of other candidates, whose eloquence may be thought more brilliant that their own. If the *detection* of such unamiable and unchristian jealousy, must greatly lower the estimation in which any one is held, the *consciousness* of

any secret tendencies to its indulgence, should produce the deepest humiliation in the presence of that God, to whom every hidden working of the heart is distinctly known. "This tendency," observes the judicious author of 'Sketches of Human Nature,' "often forms an excellent though secret test, by which preachers may try the purity of the motives by which they are influenced. There is no poison more subtile than this. Its operation must have proceeded a great length indeed, before it becomes apparent to others; but it may insinuate itself into the mind, and in a certain degree exist and work much disturbance there, though the person who feels it has sense enough to conceal it. Can you, then, cordially rejoice, though you see others not only excelling you in gifts, but making more rapid progress than you in the improvement of their gifts? If not, there is evidently something wrong. There is deep cause of humiliation, and much to be corrected."

"O that ever it should be said," exclaims Mr. Baxter, "of godly ministers, that they are so set upon popular air, and of sitting highest in men's estimation, that they envy the talents and names of their brethren, who are preferred before them,

as if all were taken from their praise, that is given to another; and as if God had given them his gifts, to be the mere ornaments and trappings of their persons, that they may walk as men of reputation in the world, and as if all his gifts to others were to be trodden down and vilified, if they seem to stand in the way of their honour! What! a saint—a preacher of Christ, and yet envy that which hath the image of Christ, and malign his gifts for which he should have the glory, and all because they seem to hinder our glory! Is not every true Christian a member of the body of Christ, and therefore, a partaker of the blessings of the whole, and of each particular member thereof? and doth not every man owe thanks to God for his brethren's gifts, not only as having himself a part in them, as the foot hath the benefit of the guidance of the eye; but also because his own ends may be attained, by his brethren's gifts, as well as by his own;—for if the glory of God, and the church's felicity, be not his end, he is not a Christian. Will any workman malign another, because he helpeth him to do his master's work. Yet, alas! how common is this heinous crime among the members of Christ! They can secretly blot the

reputation of those that stand in the way of their own: and what they cannot for shame do in plain and open terms, lest they be proved liars and slanderers, they will do in generals, and by malicious intimations, raising suspicions where they cannot fasten accusations. And some go so far that they are unwilling that any one who is abler than themselves, should come into their pulpits, lest they should be more applauded than themselves."

XXII.

Deem it not justifiable for a Christian Pastor to indulge, beyond certain limits, in the pursuits of Literature and Science.

"I have had some little taste," said Dr. Doddridge, to his brethren in the ministry, "of the pleasures of literature, and have some reason to hope I shall not be suspected of any prejudice against it: but I must freely say, that I fear many things, which employ a very large portion of our retired time, are studied rather as polite amusements to our own minds, than as things which seem to have an apparent subserviency to the glory of God, and the edification of our

flock; and consequently, I fear they will stand as articles of *abatement*, if I may so express it, in our final account; and when they come to be made manifest, will be found works that shall be burnt, as being no better, in the divine esteem, than wood, hay and stubble, how beautifully soever they may have been varnished or gilded over. Oh! my brethren, let us consider how fast we are posting through this dying life, into the immediate presence of our Lord! You must judge for yourselves; but permit me to say, that for my own part, I would not, for ten thousand worlds, be that man, who, when God shall ask him at last, how he has employed most of his time, while he continued a minister in his church, and had the care of souls, should be obliged to reply, 'Lord, I have restored many corrupted passages in the ancient classics, and illustrated many which were before obscure; I have cleared up many intricacies in chronology or geography; I have solved many perplexed cases in algebra; I have refined on astronomical calculations; and left behind me many sheets on these curious and difficult subjects: and these are the employments in which my life has been worn out, while preparations for the pulpit, or the

ministrations in it, did not demand my immediate attendance!"

"When reflecting in illness on my past years," said Mr. Cecil, "I have looked back with self-reproach on days spent in my study. I was wading through history and poetry, and monthly journals; but I was in my study! Another man's trifling is notorious to all observers; but what am *I* doing?—Nothing, perhaps, that has a reference to the spiritual good of my congregation! I do not speak against a chastised attention to literature, but the abuse of it."—"I have used large libraries, but I soon left them. Time was frittered away; my mind was unconcentrated. The usual contents of such libraries are injurious to a spiritual man, whose business is to transact with men's minds. They have a dry, cold, deadening effect."

Such remarks as these, by men so enlightened and so conscientious, have strong claims on the consideration of the young minister. It will not, however, be difficult for him to draw the line of distinction between that unwarrantable consumption of time in the pleasures and pursuits of literature, of which no good account can be rendered at the last great day, and that

occasional occupation of hours and moments, not demanded by ministerial duties, by which the mind may be relieved and recreated, as well as enriched and refined. When the distribution of time and studies proceeds on right principles, every day will be found to have its serious duties; and its duties must take precedence of its pleasures. If indeed the mind be trained by habits of salutary discipline, it will not be capable of yielding itself to the recreation of literary pleasures, until it feels entitled to unbend, by previous attention to severer studies, or by the diligent performance of other incumbent duties.

XXIII.

Suffer not the pressure of Public Engagements to contract unduly the exercises of Private Devotion.

"A man can receive nothing except it be given him of God." What success then can the christian minister be warranted to expect, either in his studies, or in his visits, or in his public discourses, unless he devoutly and earnestly seek the blessing of Him on whom all depends? How mistaken then and short-sighted

are the views, which would lead him to depend much on his intellectual efforts, and little on his devotional exercises;—which would induce him to prolong the former, by unduly curtailing the latter! Although we are not to be heard by the Father of Mercies, by virtue of vain repetitions, yet it is to fervent, persevering, and importunate prayer, that spiritual blessings are promised. Might not our prayers be much more fervent, were our minds and hearts yielded more vigorously, and for a more ample portion of our time, to the devotional reading of the Word of God, to the musings and meditations which the Scriptures are calculated to suggest, and to the direct efforts of the heart to enjoy intimate communion with our God? Ought we not to feel the excitement and encouragement, arising from the numerous promises which the Scriptures contain, of the gift of the Holy Spirit? Are we not greatly wanting in wisdom, when we do not plead these promises with the utmost ardour of soul, and the most lively confidence of faith? What was it which gave to the apostles of the Saviour, and to the primitive propagators of the gospel, their peculiar elevation of spirit, and sanctity of character, and success in exer-

tion; and what is it which has produced the eminent piety and extensive usefulness of uninspired ministers, of more recent periods, and of our own day, but the copious effusion of divine influences—the unction of the Holy Spirit? Let then the minister of the sanctuary daily and earnestly ask it, and he shall receive it; let him perseveringly seek it, and he shall obtain the heavenly gift; for "if we being evil know how to give good gifts to our children, much more will our heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him." "Let us remember that 'God who cannot lie,' who will not encourage an unfounded expectation, is actually pledged to bestow the blessing. It is true, that before he gave the promise, he was under no obligation to confer the stupendous benefit; but having placed the promise on record, in the face of heaven and earth, every attribute of his character is pledged for its performance. Let us cherish the firm assurance, that prayer is the very means appointed for the attainment of the blessing. God himself has established the connexion between the means and the end; it is therefore our duty and interest to realize that connexion. God might have given his Holy

Spirit, had it so pleased him, without any intervention of prayer; but such is not his pleasure. He requires the act—the reiteration—the importunity of prayer; and when he designs largely to bestow the gift, he excites the spirit of believing importunity. Let our supplication be 'the inwrought fervent prayer of the righteous man,' and assuredly we shall find that it 'availeth much.' "

XXIV.

Guard against Levity of Spirit and Demeanour.

There have been times and sects, in which, among many christian ministers, gravity frequently approximated to austerity, and sometimes even to moroseness. Deeply to be regretted were such tendencies, because they presented to the world an unamiable and repulsive, and therefore an incorrect exhibition of the religion of Jesus Christ. This is not however an evil against which it is particularly necessary to caution the young ministers of the present day. It is the opposite tendency

which is often too powerfully operative. It is not always kept in mind, that the office of Pastor and Teacher in the church of Christ is a grave office, and that its duties are, from their very nature, grave and serious, involving, both on the part of the minister and of the hearers, the most awful and momentous responsibility. They "who watch for souls as those who must give an account," must surely appear out of character, whenever they are found chargeable with inconsiderate levity. There is an obvious and palpable incongruity in this, which cannot fail to strike the observer, and to lessen the degree of that moral influence of incalculable value, which the character and deportment of a minister should empower him to exert over the minds of his hearers. *Who* can calculate the degree in which the impression of discourses from the pulpit is, on the one hand, deepened, or, on the other, enfeebled, by the estimate which the hearer almost unconsciously forms of the character of the preacher? *Who* can determine the extent to which the materials which enter into that estimate are derived from the hours of social and unbending intercourse? Let those hours be illumined by the smile of christian

cheerfulness, benignity and urbanity: let the manners of him who "ministers in holy things," recommend him to the more refined; let his conversation command the respect of the more intelligent; let his kindness endear him to the young; but let there be no utterance of the heart, no indication of feeling which, if remembered in the sanctuary, would diminish the effect of the truth proceeding from his lips. Let it be the resolution of every one who enters on the engagements of the christian ministry, that, relying on the aids and succours of heavenly grace, he will never counteract in the parlour the effect of addresses from the pulpit. Let him indeed aim at something more than this negative character of social intercourse; and difficult as is the attempt, and rare as is the attainment, and frequent as may be his regret at failure, let him devotionally and diligently cultivate the habit enjoined by the Apostle—"Let your conversation be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that it may minister grace to the hearers."

"A practical doctrine," says Mr. Baxter, "must be practically preached. We must study as hard how to live well, as how to preach well. We must think and think again, how to compose

our lives, as may most tend to men's salvation, as well as our sermons. When you are studying what to say to your people, if you have any concern for their souls, you will be often thinking with yourself, 'How shall I get within them? and what shall I say, that is most likely to convince them, and convert them, and promote their salvation?' And should you not as diligently think with yourself, 'How shall I live, and what shall I do, and how shall I dispose of all that I have, as may most tend to the saving of men's souls?' Brethren, if the salvation of souls be your end, you will certainly intend it out of the pulpit as well as in it! If it be your end, you will live for it, and contribute all your endeavours to attain it. You will ask concerning the money in your purse, as well as concerning other means, 'In what way shall I lay it out for the greatest good, especially to men's souls?' O that this were your daily study, how to use your wealth, your friends, and all you have for God as well as your tongues! Then should we see that fruit of your labours, which is never otherwise likely to be seen. If you intend the end of the ministry, in the pulpit only, it would seem you take yourselves for ministers no longer

than you are there. And, if so, I think you are unworthy to be esteemed ministers at all."

XXV.

Cherish the strictest Purity of Thought, of Sentiment, and of Demeanour.

The holy Apostle, when writing to the holy Evangelist, towards whom he cherished the strongest attachment and the firmest confidence, deemed it important to say, with paternal solicitude,—"Flee also youthful lusts." Your safety when exposed to temptations of this character, lies in flight—speedy and determined and unhesitating flight. "Take the first hint from conscience," and let her warning voice be to thee as the voice of God. Over the regions of imagination, which open so many avenues to the heart, exercise the strictest vigilance, that not even a thought may linger or hover there, which could be subsequently traced by the slightest vestige of contamination If this be your daily care, it will be easy to act under the advice thus administered by the venerable Abraham Booth. "Guard habitually against every appearance of imprudent and indelicate familiarity, even with

the most virtuous and pious of your female friends. It is not even sufficient that conscience bears witness to the purity of your conduct, and the piety of your motives; for in matters of so delicate a nature, there should not be the least shadow of a ground, either to support suspicion, or to excite surprise. There is need for us to watch and pray against the greatest sins—even against those to which, perhaps, we never perceived ourselves to be much inclined.—Of late," continues this exemplary minister, in a Pastoral Charge, "I have been much affected by the following reflection:—Though, if not greatly deceived, I have had some degree of experimental acquaintance with Jesus Christ for almost forty years; though I have borne the ministerial character for upwards of twenty-five years; though I have been, perhaps, of some little use in the church of God; and though I have had a greater share of esteem among religious people than I had any reason to expect; yet, after all, it is possible for me, in one single hour of temptation, to blast my character—to ruin my public usefulness—and to render my warmest christian friends ashamed of owning me. Hold thou me np, O Lord, and I shall be safe!

sanctuary far remote from all danger of spoliation. Let it be impossible for any, without the utmost perverseness of intellect, or the grossest injustice of representation, to ascribe to him any injury affecting their fortunes, their families, or their reputation. Let the purest honour, guided by a conscience void of offence and enlightened by the Word of God, regulate his domestic economy—the settlement of all his pecuniary and secular transactions—and every form and species of his intercourse with his family, with his flock, and with society at large.

If in every degree of social intercourse the christian minister should act on principles of honour, how inexpressibly important is it, that these principles should regulate all approximations to intimacy with individuals of the other sex, and especially such as may involve the tenderest and the strongest affections of the heart. "Some young ministers," it is observed by the author of the valuable 'Sketches of Human Nature,' "by paying particular attentions to young women, have led them to suppose, that they really intended to ask them in marriage, and yet when they had it in their power to marry, have paid their addresses to others! The folly,

however, (and in many cases the criminality, with which they were thus chargeable) has usually been followed by its own punishment. Their comfort has been greatly marred, by the consciousness of having most unguardedly trifled with the affections of one, whom they had reason to esteem; and their usefulness has been impaired, by the story of such an attachment going abroad; while, perhaps in the course of its circulation, many circumstances of aggravation are added, to establish the charge of cruelty and unfaithfulness. Let then christian ministers be especially on their guard against any language which can be fairly construed, as expressive of peculiar partiality, where they have no such meaning; and where they are engaged, let the thought of every other individual be at once most entirely dismissed from their minds!" To act a contrary part is basely to trample on all the laws of honour both human and divine, and to forfeit all right and title to the appellation of a man of honour both in the church and in the world.

XXVII.

Remember the pre-eminent importance of Prudence and Discretion.

Dr. Campbell has the following remarks in his Lectures on the Pastoral Character. "The ancient saying, 'Nullum numen abest si sit prudentia,' has a very important meaning. It holds also in the converse, 'Nullum numen adest, ni sit prudentia.' Or to give a christian turn to the sentiment, we may say, Every virtue will attain its end, when conducted by prudence; as, on the contrary, No virtue will answer its end, where prudence is wanting to direct it. Is not the same lesson, in effect, taught us, in more emphatic terms, by our blessed Lord, where he commands us to join the wisdom of the serpent to the innocence of the dove? As the latter is necessary for preserving the former from degenerating into low cunning and artifice, so the former is necessary to serve the latter both as a guide and as a guard."

If there be any one profession or situation in life, in which more than in all others, prudence is essential, and in which more than in all others,

indiscretion is prejudicial, it is unquestionably that of the christian minister. He has intercourse with men of all classes, of all prejudices, and of all habits. He finds in every one of them a keen-eyed observer of his temper and conduct; but by no means in every one of them a kind or a christian observer. He finds not a few arrogating to themselves the right of arraigning at the tribunal of their judgment, not only his public discourses, and his public conduct, but all his habits, all his plans, all his visits, and all his expressions. In the hours of social intercourse, amid the numerous recitals of the actions and the words of others, he is often appealed to for an opinion; and that opinion, if ingenuously and unguardedly expressed, may itself be again and again employed as an instrument of incalculable evil, working dissension and alienation in the minds of those against whom it may be directed, without the knowledge or intention of the speaker himself. "What manner of person then ought he to be in all holy conversation and godliness," and in all discretion and prudence; constantly on his guard to avoid even the slightest appearance of evil! How much he needs the knowledge of his own heart—the knowledge of

human nature in all its leading and characteristic varieties—and that degree of the knowledge of the world, which is to be attained without contracting its defilement! How much he needs the sustaining influence of that conscious rectitude of principle, which will elevate him above the depressing influence of "idle words" and "hard speeches;" and at the same time how much he needs that christian circumspection which will preserve him from offending, even in word, against the rules of the strictest propriety and the most delicate decorum! Far be it from him to make the slightest approach to those slight and almost undefined boundaries, which separate imprudence from impropriety, and impropriety from criminality. With a humble and a prayerful mind, let him seek from the "Giver of every good and perfect gift," the grace by which "in all things he may adorn the doctrine of his God and Saviour."

XXVIII.

Study and display that Courtesy, which is the essence of true Politeness.

There is much of truth and beauty in the following remarks of the late Dr. Thomas Brown,

of Edinburgh. "Politeness, in all its most important respects, is nothing more than *the knowledge of the human mind directing general benevolence.* It is the art of producing the greatest happiness, which, in the mere external courtesies of life, *can* be produced; by raising such ideas or feelings in the minds of those with whom we are conversant, as will afford the most pleasure; and averting, as much as possible, every idea which may lead to pain. It implies, therefore, when perfect, a fine knowledge of the natural series of thoughts, so as to distinguish, not merely the thought which will be the *immediate* or *near* effect of what is said or done, but those which may arise still *more remotely;* and he is the most successful in this art of giving happiness, who sees the future at the greatest distance."

That courtesy which true philosophy assists us to acquire, true religion commands us to display. "Be pitiful; be courteous"—are injunctions of apostolic authority; and a practical regard to these precepts is of no small importance in the discharge of the christian ministry. Its object is to open the minds of men to receive and embrace the truth. The minister of the

gospel is the advocate who pleads the cause of truth, and endeavours, by reasoning and persuasion, to overcome the proud reluctance of the human mind, to admit its humbling doctrines and sin-opposing precepts. Shall the pleader, then, at the *bar* of the human mind, set at defiance the *laws* of the human mind; and instead of conciliating, by the kindness and courtesy of his address, shall he deepen prejudice, by all that has the aspect of being coarse and rude and vulgar and unfeeling? Is it the part of wisdom or of goodness, to inspire the disgust of those who are distinguished by education and refinement; or to counteract, by cold repulsiveness of manners, in the hour of *social intercourse*, the effect produced by the display of talent, of fidelity, or of earnestness, in the hour of *public worship?* Will the christian minister rise in reputation, or advance in the acquisition of moral influence, by being deemed no fit companion for men of refinement, and men of family, and men of taste, and men of letters? So deemed not that accomplished advocate of the cause of Christ, who was "all things to all men, that he might by all means save some." Never was man more deeply versed in the knowledge of the

ways which lead to the human heart; and never was man more disposed, by principle, and by feeling, to apply that knowledge to the benevolent purpose of opening the heart, even in its most hidden recesses, to the influence of the truth which saves and sanctifies. *Who* would attempt to portray the character of Paul — (or who would recognize the likeness, if attempted)—without the kindness and the gentleness, and the suavity and the sympathy, which he himself copied from the model of absolute perfection? Let then the young minister of the gospel of reconciliation be, in these respects, an imitator of Paul, even as Paul was an imitator of Christ!

XXIX.

Observe Punctuality in all your Engagements.

If a man were to spend his days in perfect seclusion, he would still be a gainer by the habit of regularity, in the distribution of his time and his pursuits; but its importance obviously increases with the extent of his connexions, and the number of his engagements. If regularity be that which a man owes to himself, punctuality

is that which he owes to others. "Appointments," observes Mr. Cecil, "become debts; I owe you punctuality, if I have made an appointment with you; and have no right to throw away your time, if I do my own. Punctuality is important, because it subserves the peace and good temper of a family: the want of it not only infringes on necessary duty, but sometimes excludes the duty. Punctuality is important; as it gains time: it is like packing things in a box; a good packer will get in half as much more as a bad one.—The calmness of mind which it produces is another advantage of punctuality: a disorderly man is always in a hurry; he has no time to speak with you, because he is going elsewhere; and when he gets there, he is too late for his business, or he must hurry away to another before he can finish it. It was a wise maxim of the Duke of Newcastle—'I do one thing at a time.'—Punctuality gives weight to character: 'such a man has made an appointment; then I know he will keep it.' And this generates punctuality in you; for like other virtues, it propagates itself."

If these pointed and judicious remarks are applicable to men of every profession and occu-

pation; if they are important to the man of business, and to the man of letters, they are of still greater importance to the christian minister. If he would consult his own tranquillity; if he would be an economist of invaluable time; if he would do justice to his sacred engagements; if he would advance in the esteem and confidence of his numerous connexions; let him, although without excessive and over-anxious preciseness, pay due regard to the claims of punctuality.

XXX.

Do not hastily abandon a Station of Usefulness in which you have acquired a Moral Influence.

"Influence," says Mr. Cecil, "whether derived from money, talents, or connexions, is Power. Whoever neglects or misapplies this power, is an unprofitable servant.—Even men of feeble public talents may acquire much influence, by kindness and consistency of character. Ministers are defective, in resting their personal influence too much on their public ministry: time will give weight to a man's character; and

it is one advantage to a man, to be cast early into his situation, that he may earn a character." If these remarks are just, as undoubtedly they are, then, by abandoning a station where useful influence has been gradually attained, a minister makes the costly sacrifice of no small portion of these earnings of many years. It is not the whole, nor perhaps the greater part of that influence, which he can reasonably expect to transfer to another station. It is an influence over minds of various orders, which, by his ministry, he has trained; and those minds are better prepared, and more fully disposed, to receive benefit by *his* ministrations, than by those of any other man, although more splendidly gifted than himself. It is an influence arising from continued intercourse; emanating from the growth of character, and receiving constant accessions of strength from reciprocities of kindness. By removing to other scenes, and other connexions, these advantages are, in a great degree, surrendered; and the minister who thus transfers his services to another, and a distant sphere of exertion, places himself, in some respects, in circumstances of retrogradation, and has to recommence the work which

had been previously far advanced. These remarks are not made with a view to intimate, that a change of station is, in no instances, justifiable; but with a view to urge the most cautious and deliberate consideration, in weighing the *certain* disadvantages against the *probable* benefits of the change. That change is unquestionably to be avoided as an evil, which does not reasonably authorize the expectation of a decided preponderance of good.

AN ADDRESS*

DELIVERED IN THE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, ANDOVER,

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BY THE

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ELOQUENCE is the art of speaking *well.* Speaking well, is speaking in such a manner as tends to accomplish the object of the speaker. And that speaking is the best, or the most eloquent, which most strongly tends to accomplish the object. The objects of speakers are various; and not unfrequently the same speaker has in view different objects. They may all, however, be classed under two heads, immediate, and ultimate.

The immediate object generally is to influence minds; to lead them to think, feel, and act. A speaker does not, however, design to lead men

* This Address confirms so forcibly, and illustrates so admirably, many of the principles inculcated in the preceding pages, that, with most respectful gratitude to the eloquent Author, it is appended to this Edition.

merely to think, feel, and act, but to do this in a certain way. That way he intends himself to mark out. By communicating his thoughts, exhibiting his feelings, and by means of speech, looks, and actions, bringing these into contact with their minds, he designs to lead them to start, and move onward in the direction which the impulse of his own mind shall give them.

The ultimate object generally is some good, real or imaginary, which he expects to result from such a course of thought, feeling, and action.

Sacred eloquence is the art of speaking well on *sacred* subjects. These are subjects which relate to God, to Jesus Christ, to the Holy Ghost, to the souls of men, and to eternity. All subjects relate more or less to these, but sacred subjects appropriately, are those which relate more immediately and directly to these objects. They relate especially to the wondrous manifestation of the Godhead for the deliverance of unnumbered millions of our race from the ruins of apostasy, and their exaltation to the holiness and bliss of heaven. The character of God, the creation and fall of man, the way opened for his recovery by the incarnation, obedience, and death of Christ; the transformation of those who believe, by the power of the Holy Ghost, into the divine image; the dissolution of the world, and the eternal destinies of the righteous and the wicked, are all appropriately subjects of sacred eloquence.

Public speaking on these subjects is an ordinance of divine appointment. To speak *well* upon them, is, to speak in such a manner as tends to accomplish the object of that appointment. And *that* speaking is always the best, or most eloquent, which most strongly tends to accomplish that object.

Hence arise three questions, viz.—What was the object of God in appointing the ordinance of public speaking on sacred subjects? What kind of speaking most strongly tends to accomplish that object? And how may men of competent talents and learning, attain to that kind of speaking? In a plain practical manner to answer these questions will be my object in this address.

What was the object of God in appointing the ordinance of public speaking on sacred subjects?

It was the promotion of his glory in the salvation of men. This salvation consists in deliverance from a state of eternal sinning, and suffering; and in exaltation to a state of eternal holiness and bliss. The term on which this salvation is granted is a change of character, from a state of enmity, to a state of friendship with God. This change is manifested by repentance of sin, faith in Jesus Christ, and obedience to his commands. The grand means of effecting it, is, by divine appointment, public speaking. This then is the object of sacred eloquence,—*to reconcile men to God, for the purpose of promoting his glory in their salvation.*

This is stated to be the object, by the highest authority. Said one of the most eloquent men that ever lived, who was taught this divine art from heaven, and who spake as he was moved by the Holy Ghost, "Knowing the terror of the Lord we persuade men." To what did he persuade them? "Be ye reconciled to God." "We pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ." And "whether ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." Why did he wish to persuade them to this? "Knowing the terror of the Lord." "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." "Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved." "And he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." "The Lord shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." To save men from this overwhelming, and endless destruction, and to raise them to that "exceeding and eternal weight of glory," is the object of sacred eloquence. This was the object of Paul. It was the object of Him who spake as never man spake.

It is the object of all who are like him, and who, with his spirit, engage in this employment. This *ought* to be the object of every minister of the gospel; and of every individual who unites with this Society for the purpose of improvement in sacred eloquence. And on this occasion, Brethren, I shall take it for granted that this is *your* object. I shall take it for granted that your object is the same with that of Paul, from the memorable period when light shone around about him from heaven, and it was said of him, "behold, he prayeth;" and when he was borne onward, by the love of Christ, through perils of waters, perils of robbers, perils by his own countrymen, by the heathen, in the city, in the wilderness, in the sea, among false brethren, in weariness and painfulness, hunger, cold, thirst and nakedness, not counting life dear to him, till he broke out in triumphant strains, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." Yes, I hear your hearts echo,—This is the object.

What kind of speaking then most strongly tends to accomplish this object? It is not every kind of speaking; nor is it every kind of speaking on sacred subjects. "What is the chaff to the wheat,

saith the Lord?" "If I say unto a wicked man, Thou shalt surely die, and thou dost not *warn* that wicked man, he shall die."

What kind of speaking then will save men? I hear it whispered,—"No kind of speaking whatever. To save men is the work of God. Repentance of sin, and faith in Jesus Christ are his gifts. It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy." I know it. Every man who understands, and believes the Bible, knows it. Paul may plant, and Apollos may water, but God giveth the increase. But *how* does he give it? Without the planting of Paul, and the watering of Apollos, or with them? After he has appointed means, and commanded men to use them, does he give his blessing without the use of those means, or with it? And does the fact that *he* gives the blessing, render the means which he has appointed useless? Does it give the least hope, or furnish the least excuse to those that neglect them? Let God answer. "He that is idle in seed time shall beg in harvest, and have nothing." Although neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth, as to being the *author* of blessings, yet he that planteth and he that watereth are both as instruments essential; because God has appointed them. And, working all things after the counsel of his own will, he gives blessings in the way of his own appointment. Hence it is a principle in

his administration, settled as the ordinances of heaven, that, "as a man soweth so shall he reap." And this is as true in spiritual things, as in temporal. He of whom are all things, and by whom are all things, ordinarily apportions the harvest in kind, and quantity, to the seed sown, the ground cultivated, and the labour bestowed upon it. Hence the foundation for that which is the *glory* of creatures in a state of probation, *an abiding conviction of absolute dependence on God, and of obligation perfectly to obey him;* leading to deep humility, fervent gratitude, untiring perseverance in duty, a disposition to view all blessings as the gifts of God, and render to him for ever all the glory. And this, instead of palsying the powers of the human soul, will raise them to the highest pitch of exertion. It will give to men a boldness and an energy, a vigour and perseverance, both in willing and in doing, which nothing but a conviction that God is working in them both to will and to do, will ever accomplish. Hence when he, in whom dwelt the fulness of the Godhead bodily, would lead those who were not sufficient of themselves, even to *think* any thing as of themselves, to undertake, and to accomplish, the most difficult and glorious work ever thought of by mortals, he told them, "Without me ye can do nothing." Having fastened the conviction of this truth in their minds, he commanded, "Go ye into all the world and preach

the gospel to every creature." And to sweep away every objection which the ignorance, sloth, pride, or malice of men could raise, he said, "He that believeth, and is baptized shall be saved; and he that believeth not shall be damned." "And lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

Believing his declaration, and relying on his promise, as workers together with him, they went forth in the plenitude of *their* weakness, and *his* strength, conquering and to conquer. Satan and his legions, driven out from strong holds which they had fortified for ages, surrendered their captives, and retired in dismay before this band of martyrs, as they waved in holy triumph, from continent to continent, the banners of the cross. Songs of deliverance, even from eternal death, broke from a thousand tongues, and ten thousand hearts poured forth their choicest strains to God their deliverer. But in doing this, they lost sight neither of the instruments, nor of him who used them. With one breath they cried, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of them that bring good tidings, and that publish the gospel of peace!" With the next they cried, "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion, for ever and ever."

So it has been, in every generation. So, we learn from the Bible, it will be. "I heard a voice, saying,

Who are these, and whence came they? I looked, and, lo, a multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne of God, and the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands, and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb." Such, by divine appointment, are to be the trophies of sacred eloquence. Attended by the power of the Holy Ghost, it is destined to be the means of peopling heaven; preparing multitudes which no man can number to shine before the throne of God in the lustre of his image, and reflect the brightness of his glory through the universe.

The question then returns, and with augmented interest, What kind of speaking most strongly tends to accomplish this? How must a man speak in order to promote, to the greatest extent, the salvation of men?

He must declare all the truths which God reveals, in the connexions in which he reveals them. And he must declare them with those feelings which these truths clearly apprehended, cordially embraced, and faithfully obeyed will inspire. The only reason why preaching of any kind is ever effectual to the salvation of men, is, God has appointed it, and attends it with his blessing. And he has not only appointed that men should preach, but has told them *what* to preach. "Preach the preaching that I bid

thee." "Hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me." "He that hath my word, let him speak my word *faithfully*." This requires him to preach *whatever* God reveals, and *as* he reveals it. A preacher has nothing to do to invent new truths, to preach those which God does not reveal, or those which he does, in any different manner and connexion from what he reveals them. To the law and the testimony—if preachers speak not according to these, there is no light in them. The law of the Lord, as he reveals it, is perfect, converting the soul. It needs only to be understood, and obeyed, to prepare men for heaven. The testimony of the Lord, as he gives it, is sure, making wise the simple. All that a preacher has to do, is, in the clearest and kindest manner, to exhibit this; illustrate it to the understanding, and impress it upon the heart. "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." This gospel is that revelation which is made to men in the Bible; all of which is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable, for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto every good work. The whole of this revelation, would you be instrumental to the greatest extent in saving souls, you must preach, and nothing more. The Bible must be to you what the pillar of fire and of cloud was to Moses. Where that goes, *you* must go. If you

stop, God moves on without you. You are left behind, in a wilderness, without a guide, without a helper. Your safety and your success both depend upon following him. Where he stops, *you* must stop. If you move, go which way you will, you go without God. Fight as you may, you only beat the air. Instead of conquering, you are conquered. Or if you *seem* to yourselves to gain a temporary triumph, and begin to scowl upon less adventurous spirits, who dare not move without God, it is only a feint of the enemy to draw you into thicker ambush, and sink you into deeper ruin. You may imagine that you have hosts strong and mighty, who can overcome in battle; but, like the Egyptians in the sea, the more numerous your hosts, and the heavier your artillery, the deeper you sink. In a warfare like this, nothing can be done without God. And he will accompany none, but those who follow him.

Would you rise in sacred eloquence to the highest possible pitch, your eloquence, as to matter, must be the echo of the eloquence of God. That, like its author, is perfect. The perfection of human eloquence is to be like it. That is the pattern which you must always follow. And those who honour me, saith God, I will honour; but those who despise me, shall be lightly esteemed. Canst thou draw out leviathan with thy hook? or pierce his sides with thy spear? Thine iron he esteemeth

as straw, and thy brass as rotten wood. Thy darts he esteemeth as stubble, and he *laugheth* at the glittering of thy spear. When a strong man armed keepeth his house his goods are in peace. A stronger than he must come upon him, and take away his armour, and then he may spoil his house. In the battle with flesh and blood, principalities and powers, and the rulers of the darkness of this world, and spiritual wickedness in high places, *you*, without God, are nothing; less than nothing, and vanity; as the chaff which the whirlwind driveth away. You cannot for a moment sustain *yourself:* how can you conquer others?

In illustration of the principle under consideration, look a moment at the grand topic of revelation; that which as a means in saving sinners is the principal instrument of doing all that revelation can do, viz. *the character of God.* Who understands it, and who can understand it but himself? Who else can reveal it? And after he has revealed it, who can add to that revelation, or take from it, or in any respect essentially alter it, without making it *essentially* imperfect? No matter how great a man's talents, or extensive his learning; had he a mind surpassing a thousand fold the mind of Gabriel, and stored with all the wisdom and knowledge that has ever existed, or that ever will exist out of the mind of God, he could add nothing and take away nothing from divine revelation without rendering it,

so far as he altered it, imperfect; and tending to prevent its proper effect on minds. Would you produce the right effect on minds, raise this effect to the highest pitch of intensity, and give it the greatest extent, show them the character of God, just as he reveals it. If you fail *essentially* here, you may expect to fail every where. You may speak with the tongue of men and of angels, but without exhibiting the character of God, in the work of saving sinners you will be nothing; and you will do nothing but hinder it. Should your voice be music itself, and reach the ear of every being in the creation, it will fall powerless upon the heart which is at enmity with God, and produce in it no reconciliation to him.

You will not make men feel that while they live in known sin they are enemies to God. You will not make them feel that on account of this, they deserve to perish. You will not make them feel that except they be "born again," they *will* perish. And you will not reconcile them to Him, who, if they do not repent, believe on Jesus Christ, and serve him, will punish them with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and the glory of his power. How can you reconcile men to God, unless they feel their need of reconciliation? When he offers them deliverance from destruction, all of grace, how can they accept it, as all of grace, if they feel that they do not deserve that destruc-

tion? And if they feel that they do not deserve it, how can you reconcile them to him who threatens it, and who, if they are not reconciled to him, will bring it upon them? The thing is impossible. Hence I say again, if you fail essentially here, you may expect, in the work of saving sinners, to fail every where. Their hearts will remain cased in impenetrable adamant, and not the voice even of an angel would reach them. This adamant must be broken, and the heart within pierced. And there is but one instrument that will do this, THE WORD OF GOD. This *will* do it. "Is not my word like as a fire, saith the Lord; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?" Would you assail hearts of stone and turn them to hearts of flesh, use this. "And as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and watereth the earth, and maketh it to bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void; it shall accomplish that which I please, and prosper in the things whereto I sent it." Mark the instrument of which this promise is made, *my word that goes forth out of my mouth.* Use this. And attended by the omnipotence of him who speaks, it will be quick, and powerful, sharper than a two-edged sword, piercing to the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit, the joints and marrow, a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. It will stain the pride of

human glory, bring down high looks, and lead him who said, I am rich and increased in goods, and have need of nothing, to cry, "Wo is me, I am undone. From the crown of the head to the sole of the foot there is no soundness. Against thee, and thee only have I sinned, and done evil in thy sight."

And strange as it may seem, the same instrument, the word of God which goeth forth out of his mouth, that wounds, will also heal. It will bind up the broken heart, and heal the wounded spirit. It will give deliverance to captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound. It will even open blind eyes, and let in the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, and lead the heart that was dead, to cry, "Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon the earth that I desire beside thee." "The Lord is my portion." "Though he slay me, I will trust in him."

Nothing but the *word of God* will do this. Nothing else is the sword of the Spirit. Other weapons are carnal; manufactured by the pride and ignorance of men. Be furnished with them as abundantly as you will, and use them as dexterously, in the day of battle you will fall. Every man who uses them will fall, and the army of the aliens will move on in triumph. The god of this world is never conquered, he never retreats, and never yields a captive, but at the point of the "sword of the Spirit." To cope with him you must use this

weapon. And you must use it naked, in all its brightness. Then it will be mighty through God, to the pulling down of strong holds, casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing every thing into captivity to the obedience of Christ. However numerous or powerful your foes, you have nothing to fear; for the Lord will consume them with the breath of his mouth, and destroy them with the brightness of his coming.

Show to every sinner Jehovah, as he shows himself, a "just God, and a Saviour." Call, in his name, upon every one to love him with all the heart, and soul, and strength, and mind; and whether they eat or drink, or whatever they do, to do *all* to his glory. Tell them from him that it is a reasonable service for them to be holy as he is holy, and perfect as he is perfect; but that they have all gone out of the way, have together become filthy, that there is none righteous among them, no not one. Tell them from him, that into heaven can enter nothing that defileth, and that except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God: that the wicked will be driven away in their wickedness—be turned into hell—go away into everlasting punishment—and the smoke of their torment ascend up for ever and ever. And if while you lodge his testimony on the ear, he carries it to the heart, and fastens there

the conviction that not one jot or tittle of what he has said will fail till it all comes to pass, you will not need to add *your* demonstration. They will *feel* its truth. And think it not strange if some set their faces against the heavens, and are almost ready to curse their God and king, and look upward; while others, with clearer views of their own guilt, and a deeper conviction of God's justice, close their lips in silence, and are ready to sink into eternal despair. As they cast a lingering anxious look to you, show them, God as a Saviour, although infinitely rich, for *their* sakes becoming poor, that they through his poverty might be rich. Go with them to the manger, and thence through prayers, and tears, and sufferings, to Calvary. Follow him by the blood of his footsteps, till he bears their sins in his own body on the tree; and let them hear him as he groans, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Tell them from him, that he is wounded for their transgressions, and bruised for their iniquities; that the chastisement of their peace is on him; that the Lord hath laid upon him the iniquities of us all. And as he struggles under the amazing load, and the sun shrinks away, the rocks break asunder, and the dead start from their graves, ask them, If these things are done in the green tree, what will be done in the dry? And as they sink under the unutterable answer, he cries in agony, "Father,

forgive them." And if they are not dead, they will feel that God has no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. They will hear from the cross the voice of infinite *kindness*, saying, "Turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die?" And if they are not *twice* dead, they will feel that if they turn not, there will remain no more sacrifice for sin, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation which shall for ever devour them.

But supposing they are dead, twice dead, consumed, and their bones bleaching under the winds of heaven, be not discouraged. If you are surrounded on every side with dry bones, even if they are *very* dry, and you are asked by God, Can these dry bones live? never answer, No. But prepare to preach the preaching that he bids you. Stand before the cross, and in view of "earth's sole hope," cry, "Come, O breath, and breathe upon these slain." "Awake thou that sleepest, arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." And there will be a shaking among the dry bones; they will come together bone to its bone; flesh and sinews will come upon them, and skin cover them above, and the Spirit of the Lord breathe into them the breath of life. And as soon as they open their eyes, show them "the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world." Invite all to look unto him and be saved. Tell them

that he who spared not his own Son, but freely gave him up for them all, will with him also, to those who embrace him, freely give all things: that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate them from the love of God in Christ Jesus. And that they may have strong consolation, tell them that he hath confirmed it by an oath, that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, they may have strong consolation who flee for refuge to the hope set before them.

But tell them too, that other foundation of hope for the guilty can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ: that if he who despised Moses' law died without mercy, of vastly sorer punishment will he be thought worthy who treads under foot the blood of the Son of God: that whosoever believeth not on him shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.

And that they may have no doubt of it, carry them forward, till he comes in his glory, and the glory of his Father with the holy angels; the dead small and great stand before him, and he divides them one from another as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats. Let them *hear*, "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world;"

and "depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." Let them see the wicked going away into eternal punishment, and the righteous into eternal life. Yes, my brethren, let them *see* it. And that they may, see it yourselves. Stand, when you preach, on the ruins of the world; see the heavens passing away with a great noise, and the elements melting with fervent heat; the earth also and all things in it burnt up; your hearers going away, some into everlasting punishment, and others into life eternal; and this to depend, as a means, upon you; and you cannot but be eloquent. With the groans of the damned, and the songs of the blest mingling on your ear, and the love of Christ in your heart, you cannot but be eloquent. Every look, every action, every word, and every tear will be eloquent. And it will be the eloquence of the *heart*, which is the means of God's appointment to reach the heart. This is the eloquence which he delights to bless, the eloquence of the heart, in view of an eternal heaven, and an eternal hell, to one of which each individual of the human family is hastening; constrained by love to pour out its emotions to save immortal souls from sinking eternally in the one, and raise them to dwell eternally in the other. And though this eloquence has none of the trappings of human oratory, and is nothing but faith in Christ, and love to souls uttering itself in the strong unaffected language of

the heart, it will, with the blessing of God, impress the heart, and subdue it: for it pleases God by the foolishness of such preaching, to save all that believe.

Preach, my brethren, the truth of God, in this manner, for the purpose of glorifying him in the salvation of men, and you may hope, through grace, to turn many to righteousness; and afterwards to shine as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars for ever and ever.

How then can you attain to this kind of speaking? You, I mean, who have competent talents, learning, and powers of utterance; who have all needful human instruction, and are willing to make the sacrifices and efforts which such an attainment requires. *You must be taught it by the Spirit of God.* Human teaching is needful to show you how, in the best manner, to *express* your feelings; but you must have *divine* teaching in order to *possess* those feelings which are essential to sacred eloquence. No one but God can teach you rightly to apprehend his truth, cordially to embrace it, and powerfully to feel its efficacy on your own hearts; or with those feelings which truth inspires, communicate it to others. On these points, each of which is essential to sacred eloquence, you must be taught of God. To receive his teaching, you must feel deeply your need of it. God does not communicate his instruction where it is not desired. To receive it you must desire it, ardently desire it. You must daily

ask for it, and be ready, with the meekness and docility of children, implicitly to receive it. For this purpose you must daily listen to what he declares in the Bible; and with that fixed attention which you would, should you hear him declare it from the throne of his excellent glory. And you must feel, deeply feel that it is *all* true, and *all* important: that the Bible is all given by inspiration of God, and is all profitable. And as such you must receive it, and obey it. Love the same things that God loves, hate the same things that he hates, and seek in all your efforts the same great end. In doing this, let his will made known in the Bible be your guide. When you understand, always follow it. Do nothing, even in thought, which he forbids. Neglect nothing, even in feeling, which he requires. Form no plans, engage in no business, do no actions, speak no words, cherish no thoughts, exercise no desires, and indulge no feelings, but what you really believe, after all the light that you can gain, God approves. In every place, and at all times, let "Thou God seest me," be written upon your hearts; and underneath this inscription, "Thy favour is life, and thy loving kindness is better than life." Act continually under this conviction, and let it be your grand object to please God, and be like him. Those books, those studies, those conversations, those amusements, and those desires which draw you away from God, and render you unlike him,

abhor, renounce. Have nothing to do with any thing, which you cannot, in some way, make subservient to the glory of God, in the salvation of men. Would you rise to the highest pitch of sacred eloquence, keep your eye, and your heart, fixed on this grand point; and toward it direct, without ceasing, your highest efforts. Let the same mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus. Let no trials, no sacrifices, no temptations turn you from the path of duty. Walk with God. Live by faith. Reside at the throne of grace, and habitually commune with him who sits upon it. One hour's communion with God daily, amidst the realities of eternity, will do more to make a man excel in sacred eloquence, than a whole life of laborious study without it. Select your text, prepare your sermon, and preach for *eternity*. This will make you truly eloquent. This was the grand secret in the eloquence of Baxter, when there was scarce a family through an immense congregation, which was not a family of daily prayer; and which did not become such through his instrumentality. It was because the fire was kindled from heaven, which glows on the pages of his "Saints' Rest," that it has lighted its thousands to glory. It is because it was thus kindled, that it continues to burn, and will continue with increasing brightness and glory till the last conflagration.

This was the grand secret in the eloquence of Brainard; as it echoed through the trees of the forest, the savage dropped his tomahawk, and, with

streaming eyes, cried Guttummaukalummeh, Guttummaukalummeh, have mercy upon me, have mercy upon me.

This was the very soul in the eloquence of Paul, as kings on their thrones trembled, and beggars leaped for joy. It made songs of triumph echo in the dungeon, and carried transports of joy to the rack, and the flames.

Nor has it lost the least degree of its power in eighteen hundred years. No, even now, it melts icy hearts on the cliffs of Greenland, lights with celestial brightness the plains of Hindostan, removes blackness even from the Hottentot, and opens upon the Otaheitan the "light of the world."

Excel, my brethren, in this kind of eloquence, and extend it through the world; and the light of the moon will be like the light of the sun; the light of the sun will be *sevenfold*—and the LIGHT OF ZION will eclipse them. Kings will come to her light, and princes to the brightness of her rising. Her sun will not go down by day, her moon not withdraw itself; the LORD will be her everlasting light, and the Lamb her glory. A voice will be heard, "The kingdoms of the world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and his Christ. And the whole earth will be full of his glory, as the waters fill the seas."

FINIS.